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FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

TRACKED TO CHINA

BY CHIEF·ROGER·O'BRIEN·

Look! "AFTER THE GERMAN SPIES" Featured in No. 34, Out April 1st

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TRACKED TO CHINA

THE STORY OF A DETECTIVE'S LONG TRAIL

By CHIEF ROGER O'BRIEN

CHAPTER ONE

A DIFFICULT CASE

"FIVE hundred thousand dollars!"

"Yes; so you said before, Chief."

"A large sum to be so carelessly lost."

"It is, indeed."

"Do you think the owner has told the truth?"

"You mean that he has not really lost the jewels?"

"That is just my meaning."

"I am of the opinion that he has told the truth, but I wish you to question him yourself, and then I will see if his story tallies exactly with the one he told me."

The speakers were Kelly, the chief of the detective department in New York, and one of his most trusted and efficient assistants, who had been summoned to take hold of a case that had just been brought to their notice. The place was the private office at headquarters, and as the official uttered the last words he touched the bell on the desk before him.

"Show in the gentleman who is waiting in the outer office," he said to the attendant who answered the ring.

In a few moments more a young and fashionably-dressed man was ushered into the apartment.

He appeared to be much agitated, and he glanced somewhat nervously from the chief to his companion.

"This is the officer I mentioned," the chief said, "Darral Dudleigh."

The young man's face expressed the surprise he felt. He had heard the name of the celebrated detective often, and could hardly believe that this quiet-looking young man, seemingly not over twenty-two or three at the most, rather below the middle height and slightly built, with rather

sleepy-looking dark gray eyes, was the hero of enough adventures to fill a dozen volumes, and whose name was a terror to all whose ways were dark and unlawful.

The detective gave a slight nod, acknowledging his identity, and the chief continued:

"Dudleigh, this gentleman is Harvey Morton. He was the victim in the case I mentioned to you."

Again the detective nodded, and Morton asked:

"Is he to get upon the case, Kelly?"

"Yes, and therefore I want you to give him all the details as you have already told them to me."

"Certainly," Morton answered, with apparent willingness.

"As I understand it," said Dudleigh, speaking for the first time, "the stolen property is a case of jewels intrusted to your care by your aunt."

"What was stolen from me was an order upon the Safe Deposit Bank, and a certain token which would have enabled me to receive the jewels from the bankers."

"How did she come to give you the order and the token?"

"She was very eccentric. She was also very wealthy, and several years ago took a notion to convert all her available fortune into jewels. This she did, and placed them in the Safe Deposit Bank."

"The amount thus represented was large?"

"About five hundred thousand dollars."

"Well, proceed."

"One of my aunt's eccentricities was an aversion to make a will. Yesterday morning, however, she had a severe stroke of paralysis, and sent for me. I instantly obeyed the summons and, on arriving at her house, found her lawyer already there. He was drawing up her will, and she informed me that all her personal property and real estate were left to me."

"Including the jewels?" Dudleigh asked.

"No. There was no mention of them made in the will, but after the lawyer had left, she dismissed every one from the room and told me her wishes in regard to their disposal."

The young man hesitated for a moment or two, and Dudleigh asked:

"What were her wishes?"

"I would rather be spared explaining, if possible, as it reflects upon my aunt's character."

"But it is probably on that very point that the mystery hinges."

"I am aware of that, and I will therefore repeat the story she told as briefly as possible. She informed me what I never knew before—that she had been married. Her father lived in the West for several years, and she had met a young man named Nelson, and fallen desperately in love with him. He admired her, but he was engaged to another girl and married her. Still my aunt did not relinquish her purpose to make him return her passion, and by means that there is no need to repeat at last made the wife believe that she had been deceived, that she had not really married. At the same time she also got seeming proof that his wife was faithless to Nelson, and he left her. The deceived wife, heart-broken, took their infant—a girl—and fled. A short time afterwards seeming proof was found that both mother and child were dead. My aunt's machinations had been successful, and after a few months Nelson married her. They immediately emigrated to another State, where, after two years, Nelson died. He was possessed of considerable property, and this, of course, fell to his widow, who has retained it ever since.

"It is not a pleasant story to be obliged to tell of one's blood relation, and you can understand my hesitation in doing so. The worst of it is, however, that all the time my aunt knew that neither Nelson's real wife, nor child, were dead, but were living with a brother somewhere in Nevada. The brother believed her husband to have died and never suspected the truth. This, as I have said, my aunt knew, but for fear of endangering her own secret, she never tried to make restitution for the wrong she had done. Now that she felt death drawing near she was anxious to do so, and intrusted the task to me.

"The jewels were to be taken to the injured wife, if she was living, and if not, to the daughter, and the truth told. I was to tell no person of the mission, but to keep the jewels until my aunt was dead, and then carry out her instructions. She made me swear to do so, and I complied.

"She then gave me an order on the Safe Deposit Bank for the casket containing the jewels. With her usual eccentric way of acting, she had also left at the bank a rare old Roman coin with certain marks upon it, and stated expressly that the casket should not be given to any person, even herself, without the production of a duplicate coin. To whoever brought the duplicate coin, they should be given the casket without any questions being asked."

"A strange notion, certainly," Dudleigh remarked. "And you received the order and the duplicate coin?"

"Yes."

"Did you go straight to the bank and present them?"

"No, when I left my aunt's house it was long after banking hours, and I had no choice but to wait till morning."

"What did you do with them?"

"I took them home, and placed them in a secret drawer of a cabinet in my bed-room."

"Well, what happened then?"

"I was aroused early by a messenger with the news that my aunt had another stroke, and for me to proceed to her house immediately."

"Leaving the order and the coin in the cabinet?"

"Yes."

"How long did you remain there?"

"Until about noon, when she died."

"And then?"

"I returned to my boarding-house, to find the secret drawer of the cabinet had been opened, and the order and coin gone."

"Was the cabinet broken open?"

"No. To all appearances it was exactly as I had left it."

"What made you suspect it had been opened?"

"I did not. I opened it to take out the order and coin to go direct to the Safe Deposit Bank. When I found they were gone I was paralyzed with astonishment."

"What did you do then?"

"I rushed out of the house and hailing a taxi was driven direct to the bank."

"And you found?"

"That the order and coin had been presented that morning."

"Did the officers of the bank remember the person who received it?"

"Perfectly."

"Was it a man or a woman?"

"A woman; young and pretty, but dressed in deep mourning."

For several moments Dudleigh was silent.

"Who else knew the secret of the drawer beside yourself?"

"No one, to my knowledge."

"Were there any signs of disorder in your room?"

"None."

Again the detective was silent for a short space.

"Do you think that after you left your aunt she also intrusted the secret to some one else?"

"I am certain she did not."

"She might have been slightly delirious and done so unintentioally."

"She was sensible to the last. Besides, even supposing she had done so, she could not have told of the secret drawer where I had placed them, because she did not know of it."

"It is certainly a puzzling case," Dudleigh said. "By the way, what is your profession?"

"I am studying law."

"Have you any private fortune besides what your aunt left?"

"Some real estate bequeathed me by my father, that brings me in about five thousand a year."

"Are you married?"

"No."

The detective looked at his watch.

"It is now nearly four o'clock," he said, "and the jewels were drawn out shortly after ten o'clock this morning. That gives the thieves a six hours' start, which is a great deal under the circumstances, as we have yet to find a clue to the crooks' identity. By the way, what is the number of your boarding-house?"

"110 East Blank street."

"As soon as I learn anything of importance I will let you know. You are always to be found at that address, I suppose?"

"Yes, or at the office, No. 17 Town Row."

"Very well," Dudleigh answered, and after a few words from the chief, Morton left the apartment.

"Well," the chief asked, when they were again alone, "what is your opinion of the affair?"

"It is certainly a remarkable case," was the answer, "but I think the man has spoken the truth. It would do no harm, however, to keep him shadowed for a day or two."

"I have already detailed a man for that purpose, and now you take hold of the matter. How are you going to begin?"

"I hardly know yet. I must have time to think it over. I will first pay a visit to the two establishments, and, I do not doubt, I will find a clue somewhere."

"All right, Chief Kelly answered. "Follow your own methods. You know I have perfect confidence in you."

The detective bowed and, after a few more remarks, left the apartment.

He realized that the affair was a strange one, quite out of the range of his former experience, yet he was sanguine that he could handle it.

CHAPTER TWO

ON THE TRAIL

AFTER leaving headquarters, Detective Dudleigh hailed a taxi, and was driven to a quiet quarter of the town. Dismissing the machine, he walked a block or so, until he stopped before a house, the shutters of which were closed. Admitting himself by means of a latch-key he entered and, closing the door, ascended the staircase. Without meeting any person he reached an upper floor, and taking another key from his pocket opened one of the doors, and entering the room closed the door behind him.

It was nearly an hour before he came out again. When he did so his appearance was wholly changed. Twenty years or more seemed to have been added to his age. He now looked like a well-preserved middle-aged man who, notwithstanding the gold-rimmed eye-glasses, had not given up all pretensions to juvenility. The room where he had made his change of character was one he kept especially for that purpose.

Dudleigh had adopted the profession of detective from necessity. He continued it now from choice, for within the last two or three years he had a considerable amount of property left him, of which this house was part.

Its only occupants were an old man and woman, who took care of it during the absence of the owner. They had been servants for years of Dudleigh's uncle, who had willed him the property, and the young man knew they were to be thoroughly depended on. With his uncle, the last of his relatives had died, and Dudleigh was alone in the world. This fact perhaps made him more devoted to his profession than he might otherwise have been. He had a natural genius for it, however, and even in the most intricate case he was rarely at a loss as to the right method of setting to work. Disguised, he again left the house. His mind was made up as to the course he should pursue.

Walking along until he saw a taxi, he hailed it, and was driven to East Blank street. Alighting at the corner of the block, he walked along until he reached No. 110, the house where Morton boarded. It was a pretentious-looking house, but a slip of paper on the door-casing announced rooms with board were to be had within.

Ascending the stoop and ringing the bell, the detective inquired of the intelligent-looking colored boy, who opened the door, for a room and board. After waiting a few moments the landlady made her appearance. She had just one room, she informed him, which had become vacant that morning. The landlady, who though of middle age was very youthfully attired, seemed to be very anxious to suit her prospective boarder, and conducted him to the apartment, which was large and well furnished.

"It has been occupied for nearly a year by a young lady studying for the stage," she explained. "Her name was Miss Melville, and she was a charming girl. She had just received an engagement with a company in Chicago when she heard that her aunt died, and she had to start off to attend the funeral."

"Indeed," Dudleigh answered.

"Miss Melville got the telegram this morning, went right out and bought a suit of mourning, and started off to her aunt's home."

As the landlady gave this information the detective fancied he had landed on the very clue he was looking for; but he took care not to display more than a courteous interest in the previous occupant; and, saying that the room would suit him, he paid the somewhat exorbitant price asked without a murmur. Then, in a careless way, he reintroduced the subject of Miss Melville.

"It must have been a great disappointment to her to have had to cancel her engagement?" he suggested.

"Oh, but she is not going to do so. Her date, as they call it, is not for a week yet, and as soon as her aunt is buried she is going right on to Chicago. It would be a pity for her not to do so, after she has studied so hard. She is sure to make a hit."

"Is she pretty?" Dudleigh asked.

"Remarkably so. I have her portrait downstairs in the parlor, if you would like to see it."

The detective expressed his desire to do so, and showing him into the parlor the landlady produced a photograph album and, opening it, pointed out the portrait of a really

handsome, though rather bold-looking girl, of about seventeen or eighteen. Continuing his conversation, Dudleigh learned that the name of the company she was going to join was the Sunrise burlesque troupe. Also that Miss Melville had no relatives in the city except a cousin named Harry Danton, who was also in some way connected with the theatrical profession. At length the detective took his leave to go and see about having his luggage brought, but not before he had dexterously managed to slip the photograph out of the book and place it in his pocket. To this photograph he trusted for proof whether or not he was on the right trail, and leaving the house he proceeded to the nearest drug-store where, by the aid of a directory, he procured the personal address of the officers of the Safe Deposit Bank in which the lost jewels had been placed.

It chanced that the cashier's residence was nearest, and engaging a taxi he was driven there. He found the gentleman at home, and at once made his official character known.

"I have called in regard to those jewels fraudulently removed from your bank this morning," he explained.

"Yes," the cashier said in an annoyed tone, "it was a most unfortunate occurrence; though, of course, not the slightest blame can attach to us. The order was drawn to the bearer, and the depositor's own arrangement regarding the duplicate coin, still further relieved us of any responsibility."

"Undoubtedly," Dudleigh answered. "But the object of my visit was to learn who delivered the casket to the bearer of the coin and order."

"I gave it to the young lady myself."

"Was she young?"

"Yes, and really handsome, though there was a fast air about her that even the heavy mourning she wore could not conceal."

"You would recognize her were you to see her again?"

"Certainly."

The detective produced the photograph.

"Does that resemble her?" he asked.

"It is her likeness," was the reply.

A feeling of satisfaction filled the detective's breast. Chance had favored him, and he had already identified, if not the actual thief, at least the accomplice. After thanking the cashier he took his leave. His next task was to get upon the girl's track. The most probable way of accomplishing this was by finding the young man who passed as her cousin. Before starting to do so, however, he went to a place where he had a trunk stored, and ordered it to be sent to his new boarding-house. It was now dinner-time, and he was in hopes that from the conversation of the boarders he might be able to pick up some information that might be useful. In this he was not disappointed.

The conversation during the meal naturally turned upon the late boarder. Equally natural was it, that the elderly maiden ladies, who are to be found in every boarding-house under the sun, should have something to say to her disparagement.

"I wonder if her cousin, who used to be so attentive to her, is the son of her aunt that is dead," one of them said with a smile.

"I always did say he was no more her cousin than I am, and now I am sure of it," another answered in positive tones.

"Why?" the first one asked.

"Because I saw him this afternoon, walking along Broadway with two other horridly fast-looking young men. It is hardly likely, if his mother is dead, unless he is worse than even I took him to be, that he would not go to her funeral."

"But maybe she was not his mother," some person suggested.

"Then Miss Melville was not his cousin, for she told me long ago that she had only one aunt living."

To this statement there was no denial, and they continued talking about the girl in no friendly spirit, but revealing nothing that could be of any advantage to the detective.

When dinner was finished a middle-aged gentleman invited the new boarder up to his room to have a cigar, and not wishing to appear discourteous Dudleigh accepted the invitation.

"Those spiteful old cats downstairs struck the truth for once," he said, as they lighted their weeds.

"What about?" Dudleigh asked.

"About our late boarder," said the old gentleman, who seemed to have a good deal of the same gossiping propensities as the ladies he so disrespectfully referred to. "She was a deuced pretty girl, and no end of ginger in her, but I tumbled to her little game long ago, though I wouldn't give those old hens the satisfaction of saying so."

"The young man really was not her cousin then?"

"About as much as I am. But that was her own business. A stunning, stylish girl she was, but she always somehow put you in mind of a cat, and though she could purr, I bet she could scratch like thunder, too."

"What is the young fellow's name?"

"Harry Danton. He's a wild young guy, but he goes into good society."

"What does he do?"

"Handles the pasteboards principally, I guess, though he pretends to be a dramatic critic or something of that kind. You'll generally find him hanging somewhere around the square. Do you play billiards?"

"Sometimes."

"Then come and join me in a game. Ten to one we will fall in with him. He's not a bad sort of a fellow, and plays a game that I can't understand."

To this Dudleigh willingly assented, and, leaving the house, they strolled towards Union Square. Entering a billiard saloon the detective's companion drew his attention to a couple of young men standing at the bar. One of them Dudleigh recognized as a notorious confidence man known as Slippery Joe, while his companion informed him the other was Danton. They were evidently taking leave of each other.

"So long," Joe said. "I'll see you at The Shades before morning?"

"Yes," was the reply, and the other left the saloon, while the detective was introduced by his companion to Danton.

The three partook of a drink together, while the old bachelor jokingly sympathized with Danton for the loss of his cousin; the young man took it all in good part, while the detective regarded him keenly. At first glance he could not have been called unhandsome. Neither was he devoid of intellect, but his eyes had a treacherous, shifting light in them that, taken with the heavy jaws and sensual mouth, told his nature to be evil.

Having spotted his man, and done all that was possible at present, Dudleigh suddenly remembered an engagement and, leaving his boarding-house friend and Danton to play a game together, he took his departure.

In an hour or so more he returned, but in a totally different character. He was now a thorough-looking bum, and approaching the doors of the saloon he peered cautiously through as though afraid of being summarily kicked out. A glance was sufficient to show him the two

men were still playing, and shuffling away he took up a position where he could keep watch upon the door of the saloon. It was an hour or more longer before Danton and the other came out; they had parted, walking away in different directions. Waiting until Danton had advanced a sufficient distance, the detective followed him. His destination was, as Dudleigh had supposed, The Shades, where he had promised to meet Slippery Joe.

The rendezvous was a well-known gambling den, and ringing the bell after a short delay Danton was admitted.

Again the detective took up a position where he could command a view of the entrance. For several hours he waited. It was tedious work, but those who imagine detective work is all romance, are much mistaken. In no business in the world is there so much patience required and so many hardships to endure, oftentimes without any reward. Untiring patience is the first element requisite for success as a detective.

The dawn was growing near when the man he was watching for came out of the door, accompanied by Slippery Joe. For several minutes they stood talking, and then they parted, going in different directions. Again the detective followed Danton for several blocks, until he saw him pause before the door of a dwelling-house and, taking a key from his pocket, enter.

Dudleigh had no doubt it was the house where he lived, and after taking note of the number he walked back to his own house to get a few hours' rest.

He had learned all that he wanted to know at the boarding-house, and did not intend to return there. A little after eight o'clock the next day Danton again left the house and walked downtown.

In another disguise the detective was on hand. This time he looked like a youthful German, who was a decided swell in his own estimation.

As Danton walked rapidly downtown, he followed until he saw him enter a restaurant, when he entered also. There was no one at the cashier's desk when Danton entered, but as the seeming German came in, the proprietor came along.

"Any message for me?" Danton asked.

"None," was the answer.

With a disappointed expression Danton seated himself and ordered breakfast. The detective did likewise. It was served to them, but before either had half finished the meal a district messenger entered.

"Danton!" he said.

The proprietor pointed Danton out to him, the crook received it and, signing his name in the book, tore the envelope open and read the message. That its contents were satisfactory was shown by the expression of his face, and thrusting it in his pocket he finished his breakfast with evidently more relish than he had commenced it with. When he left the restaurant, Dudleigh was still behind him.

Making his way to the nearest telegraph office, he entered and sent a message. The detective figured that it was, in all probability, a reply to the one he had received.

Dudleigh realized the importance of getting that message into his hands. So far, however, since he had taken hold of the case, luck had been in his favor and it continued so now. Hardly had Danton entered the telegraph office than Dudleigh saw a young man approaching. He recognized him at once as a detective, who had once been a pickpocket. He had reformed, however, and now was a most efficient and trusted officer. Dudleigh at once signaled to him.

"Do you know me?" he asked.

"No; but I recognized the signal."

"I am Dudleigh."

"What can I do for you?"

"Do you see that man writing a letter at the desk there?"

"Yes."

"I want a message he has in his breast-pocket."

"You shall have it. Wait in the office till I return."

He moved away as he finished speaking. The next moment Danton came out. Dudleigh entered the telegraph office and, taking a form, wrote a message. The operator was sending the message he had just received from Danton over the wires. The officer understood the Morse code.

As the instrument clicked it off the detective wrote it down. It was as follows:

"MRS. A. J. SUTTON:
"N. Y., L. E. & W. R. R. Telegraph Office,
"Buffalo, N. Y.
"Will come on to-night. A. J. SUTTON."

It was evidently an answer to the message Danton had received that morning. The detective glanced at the clock. The hands pointed a quarter to ten.

The woman might be on the train for Chicago by the time a message got through, and a telegram from him would insure her arrest. But in so doing he might make a great mistake. She might not have the jewels with her.

While he thought thus he penned an unimportant message to a friend in Williamsburg. By the time he had done so the other detective entered the office.

"Have you got it?" Dudleigh asked.

For answer the other placed the message in his hand. Taking it he read:

"H. DANTON:
"Care of Restaurant, No. —— Blank street.
"Tell my husband to telegraph me at Buffalo when he can come on. MRS. A. J. SUTTON."

When he had read it, Dudleigh turned to his fellow detective.

"Are you on anything important?"

"No."

"Can you shadow the man you took the message from now till one o'clock for me?"

"Yes."

"Then do so, and telegraph to headquarters where to find you. If you get a chance return the message. Do you think you can find him again?"

"Yes; he is in a saloon a little way down the block, with some pals."

"All right. Come along."

Together they went out of the telegraph office, and proceeded to the saloon. Opening the door the other detective gave a nod to let Dudleigh know their man was still there. Then he entered and closed the door, while Dudleigh walked rapidly in the direction of detective headquarters.

CHAPTER THREE

A FATAL SHOT

UPON reaching the office, Dudleigh had a long interview with Chief Kelly. The latter fully agreed with him in the decision he had come to, which was to follow Danton to Chicago. After leaving the office the detective proceeded to his own house to make preparations for this journey.

Packing a large trunk with various disguises, which he thought he might need, he had it taken to the depot. At one o'clock he returned to headquarters. Hardly had he arrived than a message came from the detective who was shadowing Danton, saying where he could be found. The chief gave Dudleigh authority to retain his assistance as long as he thought necessary, and the detective proceeded to the place his comrade had named. It was a saloon near the Bowery, where Danton, Slippery Joe, and a couple of other kindred spirits were engaged in a four-handed game of pool. Dudleigh's disguise was that of an old Russian, with a heavy beard concealing the lower part of his face, and a long-tailed coat.

At first his assistant did not recognize him, but he soon made himself known, and requested him to remain until evening. To this the other willingly assented, and Dudleigh asked:

"Did you return the telegram to Danton's pocket?"

"Yes. He never knew it had been taken. I saw him later showing it to Slippery Joe, and then he tore it up."

"He would have been wiser if he had done that at first," Dudleigh answered, laughing.

Danton and his companions remained in the saloon, playing and drinking until evening; when at last they came out all were pretty well intoxicated.

"I have little enough time to get my luggage and catch the train," Danton said, as he bid the other adieu.

"You go on the seven o'clock express?" Joe asked.

"Yes."

"So long, then; good luck."

Danton walked away, while the rest re-entered the saloon.

"I guess he's safe now," said Dudleigh. "He evidently suspects nothing."

"Not a suspect," was the reply, and shaking hands they parted.

Walking rapidly for a few blocks, Dudleigh reached the establishment of a costumer, with whom he was acquainted, and entering, in a short time had completely changed his disguise to that of an old gentleman of sixty or more; then, with some articles in a satchel necessary for another change of character, he left the place and was driven to Chambers street ferry.

Almost the first person he encountered on the boat was Danton; he had evidently not considered it necessary to adopt any disguise, and he stepped on the train in blissful unconsciousness of the presence of the detective not a dozen yards from him.

Dudleigh kept a sharp eye upon him during the whole of the journey, but saw nothing out of the way in his actions.

When, as they neared their destination, the express-agent came to collect the checks, Dudleigh drew near Danton, and heard him give the name of A. J. Sutton, and his address the Palmer House. The detective gave an assumed name and ordered his trunk to be taken to the same hotel. He was carried by the same coach to the hotel, and when Danton entered the office and asked if Mrs. Sutton was staying there, he was but a few feet behind him.

"She was," the clerk answered, "but she left last night."

"Left last night?" Danton answered in tones of genuine astonishment.

"Yes. Are you Mr. Sutton."

"Yes."

"Then she left a letter for you."

As he spoke, he produced the missive and gave it to Danton. Tearing it open, he moved away and read its contents, and a muttered oath left his lips. Evidently it was no welcome news he had received. The detective burned to know the contents of the letter, but he saw no way of accomplishing his purpose. He determined to do it though, if it was at all possible.

Thrusting the letter in his pocket, Danton asked to be shown his room. As he did so, Dudleigh also asked to be shown his.

"I am fatigued after my journey," he said, "and wish to sleep. Do not call me before three o'clock this afternoon."

The two were shown to their separate apartments.

The detective had not spoken thus without a purpose. Waiting in his own room long enough for the attendant to have gone downstairs again, he proceeded to that assigned to Danton. Knocking on the door, he received a summons to enter and, doing so, he found Danton washing his face and hands.

Before he had time to express his surprise at seeing the visitor, the detective had closed the door and stepped close beside him.

"You had better not make any trouble," he said, showing a revolver as he spoke. "You are my prisoner, and I want you to come along with me."

For a moment or two Danton was too astonished to speak.

"Your prisoner!" he gasped.

"Yes; and you know well enough what for. If you come along quietly with me to my room, though, we can talk the matter over and, perhaps, be able to arrange it without any trouble. Will you come?"

"You must have made some mistake?" said Danton, who had somewhat recovered his self-possession by this time.

"I have made no mistake at all. Will you come quietly, or shall I have to use force?"

For a moment or two Danton hesitated; then seeing that the detective still had him covered with his revolver he answered:

"I tell you that you're making a big mistake, but I'll go."

"All right then; come along."

As he spoke, the detective linked his left arm within the right one of his prisoner, and led him along the hall until his own room was reached. Then closing the door, he released his hold on Danton's arm and seized his wrist.

"Hold out your other hand," he commanded.

Danton hesitated.

"Hold it out, I say," the detective repeated sternly. "I will stand no nonsense."

There was something in the tone of voice in which the command was spoken that forced obedience, and the next moment a pair of handcuffs were locked upon Danton's wrists.

"You will repent this outrage," he hissed.

"I will take the responsibility," was the reply, and as he spoke, the detective fixed a gag in the prisoner's mouth.

The next moment he lifted him off his feet easily, as if he were an infant, and tied his ankles fast together with a catgut.

"Now," Dudleigh said, "I will take the liberty of relieving you of the letter you received a short time ago."

He suited the action to the word and, unfolding the sheet of paper, read as follows:

"Danger. Clara gone on. Come to 17 Boiler avenue as soon as possible. Ask for me. MAG."

"You will have to remain here until I return. I warn you that if you make any attempt to escape it will do you more harm than good."

Speaking thus, he left the room, locking the door after

him. Then, proceeding to Danton's room, he made a search of the contents of his satchel, but found nothing of any importance, and after locking the door and placing the key in his pocket he left the hotel and proceeded to the establishment of a costumer. In about half an hour a complete change was made in his appearance, and with heavy beard, long-haired wig and blue spectacles concealing the color of his eyes, not even an expert would have recognized him. Thus disguised he made his way to Boiler avenue, which is a slang name for one of the lowest streets in the city.

No. 17 was a drinking-saloon of the lowest class; a veritable dive, situated on the ground-floor of an old wooden rookery that looked as if it would blow down before the first heavy wind. Entering, he found a roughneck behind the bar, and a number of men, whose appearance told that they belonged to the lowest class, lounging around.

They all looked at him suspiciously as he entered until, advancing to the bar, he made a signal common to criminals all over the continent.

"Is Mag here?" he asked in a low tone, as he took the drink he had called for.

"Where are you from?" the bartender asked.

"New York."

"When?"

"This morning."

"What name?"

"Sutton."

The bartender beckoned to one of the men lounging around.

"See to the bar, Phil, till I come back," he said, and then telling Dudleigh to follow him, led the way to a door in the rear of the saloon.

Passing through it, he continued to lead the way along a dark hall and up a rickety flight of steps to an upper floor; then, pausing before a door, he knocked three times, giving, as he did so, a shrill, peculiar whistle. In a few moments the door was opened by a swarthy-faced, though not unhandsome woman of about thirty, who looked from the bartender to the detective suspiciously. Dudleigh knew he had a difficult part to play, but one of his talents was a wonderful power of imitation of voices, and in tones that were exactly Danton's own he said:

"It's all right, Mag. I got your letter, and I thought it was best to change my looks."

"You've done it well," was the reply, "since you deceived me. Come in."

She opened the door wider to admit him, and when he had entered closed it again. The detective had no apprehension of not being able to keep up the character he had assumed, except on one point, and that was that she might ask him to remove his spectacles, so he determined to ply her with questions and not give her an opportunity to do so until he had learned all he wanted to know.

"What is the danger?" he asked.

"You have been followed from New York?"

"Who by?"

"Dudleigh."

"Who warned you?"

"Jim. I received the telegram yesterday afternoon."

Who Jim was the detective did not know, nor did he deem it prudent to ask; instead he said:

"And that was the reason Clara went on?"

"Yes. She will wait for us at Nugget Gulch. We will travel as emigrants, and leave the train at Austin. Then stage it to Nugget Gulch. It will throw the detectives off the track, and then we can, with Gordon's assistance, easily reach another point of rail unsuspected, secure the jewels in San Francisco, and make our way to China."

"But," said Dudleigh, "I cannot see any additional safety in that plan. It will only be giving the detectives a better show to nab us. It would be better to push right on at once."

"No; for that would be exactly what they would expect. By following this plan they will have reached 'Frisco, and had time to come to the conclusion they were on the wrong track before we arrive."

"But Dudleigh may now be in the city. For all I know he may have followed me here."

"Jim said he only started last night. By the time he reaches here we will already have started, and as he will take the fastest route he will pass us on the road."

The detective saw there was some truth in the woman's argument, supposing "Jim's" information to have been correct. As it happened, however, it was not, and he thought he held the game all in his own hands. Who Jim and Gordon were, however, he was ignorant, and he was about to ask further concerning them, when three taps came on the door, accompanied by a low, peculiar whistle. Instantly Mag opened the door, and Dudleigh saw the barkeeper and half a dozen men standing on the threshold, including Danton.

"What is the matter?" the woman asked.

"Matter enough," was the answer. "We are betrayed. Upon the detective!"

As he spoke, he and the rest of the gang, all of whom were armed with clubs, sprang upon Dudleigh. Though the attack was wholly unexpected, the detective was not taken altogether at a disadvantage. Long experience had taught him to be always on his guard, and as the ruffian spoke, a revolver appeared in either hand. As he drew them he sprang backwards and planted himself against the wall. The weapons spoke simultaneously, and the barkeeper and one of his companions fell heavily to the floor. Again the detective discharged his weapons, and two more went down. Once more his fingers pressed the triggers, but as they did so another report rang out.

It was the woman who had fired the shot, and her aim was true; without a single cry the detective reeled and fell heavily.

CHAPTER FOUR

STILL IN PURSUIT

"QUICK! back to the saloon," cried Mag. "The noise of the shots will have roused the neighborhood. Danton and I will attend to putting the wounded out of the way."

The gang saw at once the truth of her words, and hurried from the room. When they had gone Mag locked the door, and then crossing the room ran her hand down the molding of one of the panels of which it was framed. As she did so the panel slid aside, revealing a sort of closet behind.

"Quick?" she said, turning to Danton. "Help me to drag them in here."

The man complied with her request.

One man was badly wounded, and Mag and Danton raising him between them laid him as gently as possible on the closet floor. The wretch moaned in evident agony.

"Try and make as little noise as possible," Mag said. "The cops may be here shortly. As soon as they are clear we will see you are attended to."

As she spoke she closed the panel upon him and turned to Danton.

"We must put this bull out of the way now," she said.

As she spoke, she crossed the room to the fire-place and pressed a knob set in the wall; as she did so the hearthstone rose on a hinge, revealing a large cavity beneath.

"Help me drag him over here and dump him in," she said.

"Let's make sure he's dead first."

"He's dead fast enough," was the answer.

It certainly looked as if the woman had spoken the truth, for the detective's face was covered with blood and his form was set and rigid. Between them they dragged him to the cavity and threw him in. Then Mag let the stone into its place again.

"Now let us get into another room before the cops come along," she panted.

She led the way out of the room as she spoke, and up the stairs, to a room on the next floor. Entering, she seated herself, and motioned Danton to do the same.

"Now tell me how that fly-cop came to tumble to our racket," she said.

"Hanged if I know in the first place," was the reply. "But I do know how he came to find out you were here."

"How?"

"He read your letter."

"How did he get hold of it?"

In a somewhat sheep-faced way Danton related how Dudleigh had made him a prisoner.

"But how did you escape?"

"I managed to get the catgut around my ankles over the edge of the bed, which was an iron one, and sawed it through. Then I worked the gag out of my mouth and climbed up to the transom and waited till one of the servants came along. I offered him twenty dollars if he would let me out without telling any person about it, and he did so. Then I gave him ten more to get a file and cut the handcuffs."

"Do you think he will give it away?"

"I guess not, for his own sake; but did you tell that detective our plans?"

"Yes."

"And also the danger that threatens us?"

"Yes."

"What is it, and why did Clara go on?"

Mag related the reason, as she had done to Dudleigh.

"Then Jim was wrong, and the bull must have traveled on the same train as I did."

"Is seems so."

"What are we going to do now?"

"Just carry out our plans and join Clara in Nugget Gulch. I guess Dudleigh won't give us away, now that he's dead."

"Hardly," Danton replied, with a hoarse laugh. "Then we will start to-night."

"Yes; but it will be better to travel separately and in disguise."

To this Danton agreed, and for half an hour longer they continued talking until any excitement occasioned by the sound of the revolver shots had subsided, and there seemed to be no danger of the police visiting the house, when they went out to complete their arrangements for their departure.

Dudleigh was in a pretty tight place, but he was worth half a dozen dead men. The bullet had not penetrated, as Mag supposed, but merely grazed his temple, causing the blood to flow freely and occasionally temporary unconsciousness.

Hardly had the hearthstone been closed above him than he began to revive. With consciousness also came recollection, and he realized that he was buried alive. Stretching out his arms he found he could touch the sides and roof of his cell. Indeed, the roof was not a foot above his head.

Feeling in his pockets he found they had not been rifled, and taking out his match-safe he struck one of the matches. By its light he could see that one side of the cell was composed of stone, while the other was formed by a massive beam. The floor was of wood, while the roof was stone. As he discovered this, the nature of the place he was in struck him at once. He realized that the criminals supposed him to have been killed and had thrown him beneath the hearthstone.

He knew also that he could not remain there long without being suffocated. If he intended to escape alive he knew there was no time to be lost in making the attempt. In addition to his pair of revolvers he always carried with him a heavy-bladed knife, and drawing it, considered in which way he should use it. Should he attempt to pry up the stone or cut his way through the wooden floor beneath? He decided on the latter.

Even if he could not make his escape that way, the opening would at least admit him air. He accordingly set to work, and heard footsteps on the floor of the room and the sound of voices.

What the words were he could not distinguish, but he had no doubt the speakers were his enemies returning for their comrades. As he thought this, he grasped the knife firmly, and prepared for a spring should they take it into their heads to raise the stone for the purpose of seeing if he was still alive.

Half an hour or more passed, and then the sounds of both footsteps and voices ceased, and he heard the door close. He at once set to work to cut through the floor. Before he had worked many minutes, however, he saw the hopelessness of the task. The wood was laid upon a foundation of mason work. There was nothing for him but to attempt to raise the stone.

Turning himself over, he placed his shoulders beneath it, and exerted all his strength. It did not move an inch, and he plainly saw that to attempt to pry it up with the knife would result in nothing beyond snapping the blade. For a few moments he almost gave way in despair. To lie thus in a living grave, waiting the approach of inevitable death, was horrible.

With the keen point of the knife, he attacked the wooden beam with the intention of cutting it through and, if possible, making his escape through the floor. The task soon proved to be not half so hard as he had imagined. What he had supposed a solid beam was merely a wide plank on its edge. The discovery gave him renewed hope, and he worked away indefatigably. In a comparatively short time he had cut a hole sufficiently large to admit of crawling through. Doing so, he attacked the floor above him. This was a more difficult task than the other, as the floor was of hard wood, and his knife catching on a spike the point snapped off. Still he worked on for several hours, until he had a hole several inches in diameter cut through the floor. To enlarge it was a matter of less difficulty, until at length he was able to squeeze his body through it, and stood once more at liberty.

Even when he had first cut through the floor no light had come through the opening, and now he saw the room was in darkness. His escape had occupied more time than he had imagined, and it now was night. For several moments he stood thinking how he should act next. His escape was as yet only half accomplished. He had yet to get out of the house.

Trying the door of the room, he found it was unlocked, and passing through he descended the stairs and went

along the hall to the door leading into the saloon. Then, grasping his broken knife firmly, he opened the door and, passing through, dashed at full speed through the saloon.

So utterly unexpected had been his appearance and so rapid his action that he had reached the door before its occupants had fully realized what had happened. Then they started in pursuit. Dudleigh had the start, however, and by the time they reached the street he had turned the corner and vanished. He did not slacken his speed for several blocks, and then made his way to the costumer's he had visited in the morning. As he reached it a bell chimed nine o'clock. The costumer had not yet closed, however, and in a short time the detective presented the same appearance as when he left the hotel that morning. Returning there, he made inquiries for Mr. Sutton, and was informed he had left the hotel that evening.

"Did he mention where he was going?" Dudleigh asked.

"No; but it was somewhere west, for his luggage was taken to the 9:15 express."

The detective asked no further questions. He had no doubt that Danton and his female accomplice, thinking him safely out of the way, had determined to carry out their original plan, which she had unintentionally revealed in the morning. It was evident, however, that they had modified their plan, as far as traveling local was concerned, since they had taken the express.

If they had stuck to that idea he would have had no difficulty in overtaking them on the road. As it was, they had a good twelve hours' start, for, on referring to the time-tables, he found a train did not leave till 7 a. m. next morning. The following morning he started in pursuit.

CHAPTER FIVE

HURLED TO DOOM

TRAVELING as rapidly as possible, it occupied four days before Dudleigh reached Nugget Gulch.

The last hundred and fifty miles or more he had traveled by stage, and now he stood in the only hotel of which the little mining town boasted. The inhabitants of the town were not over a couple of hundred in number, and the majority were pretty rough customers. Nugget Gulch was but a year or two old, and though at one time it had promised to become a great mining center, the finds of ore in its immediate vicinity had not turned out so rich as had been expected, and the tide of emigration had passed it, and found high-water mark at Placerville, a newer town some twenty or thirty miles farther on.

The stage left but few passengers at Nugget Gulch, and when the detective, in all the glory of a boiled-shirt and store-clothes, had alighted there his arrival made quite a sensation. It was not diminished when he registered as "Charles Morton, speculator"; and he at once had the offer of a hundred different claims at a price which the owners protested was literally giving them away.

Giving a general promise to see about them, Dudleigh asked the crowd to drink, an invitation which was universally accepted; and then, lighting a cigar, he entered into conversation with a grizzled old miner.

"You don't seem to have many strangers come here, judging by the hotel register?" he remarked.

"Waal, not so many as thar might be," the other admitted reluctantly. "Yer see ther Gulch ain't got known well yet. When it does I tell yer it'll take the shine outer Placerville."

"It wants capital to build it up, I suppose?"

"That's just it. And there ain't much capital around, except what Colonel Gordon has in his mine."

"Colonel Gordon?" the detective repeated.

"Yas. He's owner of a big mine about five miles down the Gulch. He hires more than a hundred men. And talking about visitors coming here, thar were three came yesterday."

"There were?"

"Yes. An old man and woman, and a pretty slip of a gal. They're staying down at Colonel Gordon's. The old man looks as if he was well fixed. They say he's got an honorable or something to his name."

A look of satisfaction came upon the detective's face at this information. He had little doubt that the three visitors to the Gulch were the three he was tracking. Had not Mag told him that Gordon would find some means of concealing their identity, and covering their escape. Before he had time to make any reply, a man entered the saloon. Dudleigh's companion nudged him with his elbow.

"Thar's Colonel Gordon now," he said.

Looking at him, Dudleigh saw he was a man of thirty-five or thereabouts. He had a swarthy skin and regular features, and might have been called handsome had it not been for the fiery glances of his restless black eyes, which gave his face a sinister expression.

He was richly, almost foppishly, dressed, and in the polished bosom of his shirt blazed a huge diamond, while another sparkled on his finger. He entered with a swaggering air, tapping his boot with his riding-whip, and close behind him came another person. This was a seemingly old man of sixty or more, but with a certain stiffness of manner about him contrasting with Gordon's free-and-easy air.

"That's the old galoot, the father of the gal," Dudleigh's companion said in a low tone.

"Well, Jake," Gordon said, stepping up to the bar, "set us out some of your least deadly poison." Then turning to the crowd he asked: "Gentlemen, will you join my friend and me?"

All responded with the exception of the detective, and Gordon, noticing the circumstance, and seeing he was a stranger, looked at the hotel register. Then, advancing to where Dudleigh sat, he said:

"You are Mr. Morton, I presume?"

"That is my name," Dudleigh answered.

"Mine is Gordon," the other said frankly. "We don't stand on any ceremony out in these parts; so I introduce myself. I am a mine-owner, and as I see you sign yourself a speculator, perhaps the acquaintance may be of advantage to us both. Won't you join my friend and I?"

As it was his desire to form Gordon's acquaintance, Dudleigh assented, and Gordon introduced his companion as the Honorable Marcus Maxwell, of California. As the other acknowledged the introduction the detective felt a thrill of satisfaction. An adept in the science, no disguise could deceive him, and he knew at once that the pretended Honorable Marcus Maxwell was none other than Danton.

"My friend, with his wife and daughter, are on a brief visit to me," Gordon explained. "I would be happy if you will also become my guest during your stay. My accommodations are nothing to boast of, but still they are better than can be had here."

As the offer fell in completely with Dudleigh's wishes, he accepted it at once.

"That is right," Gordon said. "The landlord here will let you have a horse, and you can ride back with us. You can take a few articles with you in a satchel, and I will send for your heavier luggage in the morning."

The landlord, though not over-pleased at having a guest taken away from him, evidently did not wish to offend so influential a man as Colonel Gordon, so he allowed he could furnish a horse, and sent one of the men in the saloon to saddle one.

While the detective went to the room that had been assigned to him to procure a few necessary articles, the so-called Maxwell drew Gordon aside.

"Do you believe that fellow is the speculator he pretends to be?" he asked.

"I see no reason to doubt it."

"He isn't, though."

"What makes you think not?"

"He's a detective, and he is after me. He is the same one Mag thought she did for in Chicago."

"The hades you say?"

"I had those eyes of his on me once, and I can never forget the flash that was in them. The same flash came for a moment when he was introduced to me, and I knew he recognized me, in spite of my disguise."

"In that case it is hardly necessary to take him home with us?"

"One well-aimed bullet will rid us of him forever."

For a moment or two Gordon was silent.

"No," he said. "His body would be found, and for all we know he may have allies. I know of a better way than than. Leave it all to me. Hush! he is coming now."

As he spoke they turned and re-entered the saloon, and in another moment Dudleigh joined them. A few moments more and the horse provided by the landlord for the detective was brought to the door, and after another drink the three started. As they did so the sun was setting. They rode slowly at first, Gordon talking principally on mining matters; at length he said:

"I am a believer in the capabilities of this section with capital to develop them. I know of several chances that I am certain would pay rich. All my own capital at present is in a new mine I have opened, or I would take hold of some of them. There is a mine not a mile from here that was opened a couple of years ago. It paid expenses, and that was all, and the owner abandoned it. I am confident that if he had sunk the shaft ten feet deeper it would have been a bonanza."

In order to keep up his assumed character, Dudleigh expressed a deep interest in the mine, until Gordon said:

"It is but half a mile or so out of our way and, if you like, we will ride there and take a look at it."

To this proposal the detective gave his assent and, turning from the track, they rode for about half a mile when a collection of tumble-down shanties came in view.

All three dismounting from their horses, Gordon led the way to the deserted mine. He talked volubly as they went along. Ignorant that his identity was known, the detective had no idea of treachery.

"To any one looking for a profitable investment I would strongly recommend this," Gordon said. "The walls of the shaft cannot have fallen in yet, and could easily be made as good as ever."

As he spoke, he entered the shed over the mouth of the shaft. Outside the dusk was rapidly gathering, and it was nearly dark inside.

"It is almost too dark to form any opinion to-night," Gordon said; "but you can see the walls are still solid."

He advanced to the edge of the shaft and, still without any suspicion of foul-play, Dudleigh also advanced, and standing there peered into the depths. Hardly had he done so than he received a heavy blow, and pitching forward fell headlong.

CHAPTER SIX

BACK TO LIFE

IT was Danton who, seeing his opportunity, had struck the blow at the detective, causing him to lose his balance and pitch down the shaft. As Dudleigh fell, one wild, involuntary cry left his lips. Then all was silence. Gordon turned to his companion.

"You struck just in time," he said. "I'll gamble you've seen the last of him now."

Danton drew a long breath.

"The blow did not stun him, as I intended it should," he said.

"Never fret about that," Gordon answered. "That shaft is over a hundred and twenty-five feet deep. A cat thrown down there could not live."

"No, I suppose not, but this devilish detective seems to have more lives than any cat."

"Well, he's fixed this time. Now let us be moving home."

"What will we do with the horse?"

"Take him along, and send him back to the owner to-morrow."

"And how will you account for Dudleigh's disappearance?"

"I will send him back the horse to-morrow with an order for his baggage. It may contain something that will be useful to us. Then when I say he went to Placerville no one will doubt my word."

"That is so," Danton assented, and the two walked back to where they had left their horses.

It was rapidly growing dark by this time and, mounting, they led the horse the detective had hired and rode away.

Neither had any doubt that the detective had met his doom this time, and had they seen, two hours or so later, by the light of the moon just rising, a man crawl out of the mouth of the deserted shaft, their superstitious fears would doubtless have been touched. It was no spirit, however, that thus emerged, but the detective himself. As Danton had said, the blow he had received had not stunned him. With the instinctive motion of a falling man he clutched wildly at the air as he fell, and his outstretched hands grasped something.

It was a projecting beam, and he seized it with an energy of despair and hung on, though the shock seemed almost to tear his arms from their sockets. For a moment or two he hung there in suspense, and then exerting all his strength he managed to raise himself upon the beam.

The weight of his body thus released from his arms for a few moments he rested, panting and breathless. Then taking the small pocket-light he always carried, he struck a match, and applying it to the wick, shed a feeble ray of light through the darkness. He calculated that he had fallen a distance of ten feet or more; he was able to see the edge of the shaft above him, but below was nothing but darkness. Looking around, he saw that the walls of the shaft were supported by crossed-beams of timber.

It appeared an easy enough task to climb by their aid to the mouth of the pit, had it not been for the slimy green mold with which they were covered. Of this, the beam to which he had caught, projecting beyond the rest, was free, otherwise it would have been impossible for him to have retained his hold. There was nothing for it, however, except to make the attempt, and drawing his knife he began scraping off the mold to get a dry spot to grasp with his hands. It was dangerous and tedious work, thus making the ascent, but he was successful at last, and once stood on solid ground. Seating himself, he rested

for a few minutes, and then started to make his way back to the village.

As he passed the spot where the horses had been left, a thought struck him. Had the ruffians remembered the satchel which he had placed on the ground when he dismounted, and taken it away with them? If they had not, by the aid of the articles it contained he would be able to assume another disguise. A few moments' search showed him that they had either forgotten or overlooked the satchel. It was lying in the same place where he had left it, and taking it up he set off at a rapid pace toward the village.

He had noticed several unoccupied shanties on the outskirts, and he determined to seek the shelter of one of these while he arranged a new disguise.

Further along the road he came upon the body of a roughly-dressed man.

For a moment or two he stood in thought. Suddenly an idea struck him. He proceeded at once to put it into execution. Stripping off the fallen man's outer clothes, he began to attire himself in them, putting them on over his own. In his character of a speculator he had worn a wig and long beard; these he now removed. Then putting on the dead man's wide-brimmed felt hat, his change of appearance was complete.

"I guess I will pass inspection now," he said, as he placed the wig and beard in the satchel; and then leaving the dead man's body where he had fallen, resumed his walk towards the village.

When he reached the outskirts he placed the satchel in one of the deserted shanties, and then made his way to the saloon. Walking up to the bar he called for a drink, and asked the crowd to join him, which it willingly did, and then demanded a room for the night.

"I was coming over from Placerville," he explained, "and when I got a little more than half-way my horse got his foot in a hole in the road and broke his leg. I had to shoot the beast and foot it the rest of the way. I'm pretty well pegged out, I can tell you; and so if you've got a bed ready I'll turn in."

All the time he was speaking he kept a sharp eye both upon the landlord and the crowd to see if any of them recognized him. He was soon satisfied none of them did, and, the landlord telling him the room was ready, he set the drinks up again for the crowd, and followed the landlord upstairs to his room.

"The room was took before by an Eastern speculator what come in the stage to-day," the host explained. "That's his trunk there, but he's gone for the night over to Gordon's, so you can have the bed as well as not."

Dudleigh congratulated himself on the chance that had caused him to be assigned to the same room to which his trunk had been carried, and as the landlord took his departure he locked the door, and opening the trunk took out some articles he needed to carry out his future plans.

Having done this he laid down and slept soundly till morning.

Taking the articles he had taken from the trunk the previous night he concealed them about his person, and then descended to the saloon. There was no one there except the landlord. Dudleigh asked him to join him in an eye-opener. The landlord was nothing loath to accept the invitation, and when the drinks were swallowed the detective said:

"I want to get over to Jordansville to-day, and I don't feel like waiting for the stage. Do you know any person around here who has a likely piece of horse-flesh for sale?"

"Do I?" the landlord answered. "Well, I rather should say I did. I know a man that's got as pretty a three-year-old as ever you threw your legs across."

"Whereabouts can I find him?"

"Right here."

"It is yourself, then?"

"That's about the size of it. Come along with me to the stable and have a look at the animal."

The detective followed him, and after examining the horse, which really was a fine one, they returned to the saloon where, after considerable haggling, the animal changed masters.

Then waiting only long enough to have breakfast and take a parting drink with the landlord, Dudleigh mounted his new purchase and rode away from the saloon, and out of the village in the direction he had come by the stage the previous night.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AN INTERRUPTED JOURNEY

HARDLY had the detective taken his departure than a messenger from Colonel Gordon arrived at the saloon. He had brought with him the horse hired by the detective on the previous evening, as also a team and wagon to carry the trunk left by the supposed speculator. The man said Colonel Gordon would be responsible for any expenses, and the landlord, without any hesitation, handed the trunk over to him. Both Danton and Gordon anxiously awaited the messenger's return. As soon as he arrived the trunk was carried into the house, and to Gordon's own room. Then locking the door the two proceeded to force it open. As they saw the various disguises, Gordon said:

"You were right in your suspicion. The man who lies at the bottom of the old shaft was evidently the detective."

"I was sure of it from the first."

"Well, he is out of the way safely now."

"Yes, and we can resume our journey at once."

"But there is another thing to be considered."

"What is it?"

"Dudleigh may not be alone on the case. He has the reputation of never having any partners when he can help it; when he does, he only entrusts them with some detail."

"You do not know him personally?"

"No."

"It is strange, then, that you recognized him so quickly by the mere expression of his eyes."

"I told you I saw them once in the hotel in Chicago. His spectacles were off, and I felt then I would know those eyes again among a thousand other pairs."

"Then you think that since he is out of the way you have nothing further to fear?"

"I think not."

"All right. Let us go and talk to the women."

The two accordingly left the room and proceeded to communicate their decision to their female accomplices.

Shortly after the man who had been sent for the detective's baggage had left the saloon, the whole village was thrown into a state of excitement over the discovery of the dead body of the man on the road.

Almost all the inhabitants crowded into the saloon to discuss the affair.

"It must be that some road-agent is in these parts again," one of them said. "We'll have to organize the vigilantes again, or we won't none of us be safe in our beds at night."

This seemed to be the general opinion until suddenly the

landlord brought down his fist on the bar with a force that made all the glasses jingle.

"Look hyar, boyees," he said. "Darn my cats, if I ain't the biggest fool this minute in Nugget Gulch!"

"What's the matter, Jake?" the crowd asked in one breath.

"Why, just this. It warn't no more road-agent killed that galoot than it war me."

"How do you know?"

"Because I know the very cuss that done it."

"You do?"

"Yes. He slept here last night, and this morning I sold him a horse to ride away on. He said his name was Pete Palisade, and that he came from Placerville, and was going on to Jordansville."

Instantly the landlord was plied with questions, while suggestions to form a party of vigilantes on the spot and pursue the supposed murderer were freely offered. There was no one to take the lead, however, and the crowd's indignation expended itself in loud talk and deeper potations, after which they adjourned in a body to "plant the galoot decently." After the ceremony was performed they all returned to the saloon, where most of them remained until the stage from Jordansville arrived. As on the previous night, it contained a single passenger, a young man attired in an exaggerated plaid suit, patent leather boots, and wearing blue spectacles. He signed his name in the register as Henry Aylward, London, England, tourist, although after he had uttered his first sentence there was no need to have stated his nationality.

A cockney of the most pronounced type, he afforded not a little amusement to the occupants of the saloon.

"I am doin' this bloomin' country, you know," he explained, "with a party of friends. They wanted to ride on horseback from Austin to Carson City, but I weally couldn't stand that. Still I couldn't desert them altogether, so I came by the stage. They'll be along to-morrow or the next day, and as I'm very much used up, I'll wait here till they come along."

As he appeared to have plenty of money and was liberal in treating the crowd, the landlord had no objection to this proposition. Indeed, he only hoped that Gordon would not turn up to relieve him of his guest as he had done the night before. This, however, was exactly what happened, for just as some of the crowd were getting the Englishman on a string about road-agents, Gordon entered the saloon.

"Well, Jake," he said, greeting the landlord, "our speculating friend did not stay long. He went to Placerville this morning as soon as his baggage arrived."

Then, catching sight of the Englishman, he advanced towards him and in his offhand way introduced himself.

"I'm charmed to meet you, I'm sure," the tourist responded. "It is such a treat to meet a cultivated person in this blasted western country."

"Yes," Gordon said, "we are all rough here; but we're honest. What do you say to staying at my house while you are here? I have some guests—the Honorable Marcus Maxwell and his wife and daughter—a pretty girl."

The Englishman eagerly accepted the invitation, and the landlord again saw his guest taken away from him.

"I shall have to apologize for my costume, you know," Aylward said as they rode along. "All my baggage had to be left behind when we started on our ride, except what I could carry in a satchel."

Gordon assured him there was no need for apologies on that score, and after a short time Gordon's house was reached. It was a pretentious-looking edifice, surrounded by a veranda. It was handsomely furnished, and there seemed to be no lack of colored servants. After the Englishman had been shown to his room and made a few changes in his toilet, his host introduced him to an old lady and gentleman, and their daughter, whom he said were Mr., Mrs., and Miss Maxwell. They all received him cordially, and the young man seemed to admire the young lady greatly.

"My eyes are verwy weak, you know," he explained. "I had an operation performed on them, and I was ordered never to let the light upon them, except through blue glass. It is a horwid bore, you know, and makes a fellow look widiculous."

During the dinner, which was served in good style, Mr. Maxwell remarked:

"We are going to meet some English friends of ours at Carson City. Lord and Lady Lennox, and their daughter. Perhaps you know them?"

"Well, ah, that is, I know the family," Aylward answered. "I should like very much to be introduced to them."

The Englishman looked through his blue glasses at the young lady.

"It would be so nice if you could," she said.

"If it was not for my friends, you know, I would be too happy to do so," he returned. "Indeed, I think for the sake of such pleasant traveling companions I could almost be induced to disappoint my friends."

They all seemed very desirous that he should do so, and before they separated for the night it was agreed he should accompany them in the stage to Placerville the following evening. Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell, as well as their daughter, seemed to have taken a great fancy to him, and all the following day paid him a great deal of attention, asking innumerable questions regarding the English aristocracy so persistently, that any person not so egotistical as he seemed to be, would have suspected them of merely seeking his society for the sake of the information they could get.

Word had been left at the saloon in the village for the stage to call at Gordon's house for the passengers; it was due about five o'clock, but it was nearly five hours later before it came. The driver explained the delay by saying he had broken one of his springs, and had to wait to get it repaired. He was bound to get through to Placerville that night, however, and, the four passengers taking their places, he drove off. After leaving Gordon's house, the road lay through a desolate stretch of country, causing Miss Maxwell to express a fear of robbers.

"But there are none, you know," the Englishman said; "except in novels. Gordon assured me there had been none in this part of the country for a long time."

"No," Mr. Maxwell answered. "There used to be a scoundrel who infested these parts, but he and his band have not been heard of for several months. Indeed, there is every reason to hope they have left this part of the country forever."

There came a sudden interruption. The sharp report of a rifle rang out, while the stage came to a sudden stop, pitching the passengers forward from their seats.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A STEP TO LIBERTY

THE voices of female passengers were raised in shrill screams, and the moonlight glinted on two polished tubes thrust through one of the windows.

"Attempt any resistance and you will be shot," a stern voice shouted.

"Waltz right out now, pilgrims," a man roared, "and deliver up all your valuables."

Looking out, all saw that the stage was completely surrounded by armed and masked men, and there was no choice but to obey. The Englishman was the first to step out. Then Mr. Maxwell, and after him his wife and daughter.

"Is that all there are inside?" one of the masked men asked.

"Yes," Maxwell answered.

"Very well. Now hurry up and hand over your weapons, money and jewelry."

Reluctantly all did so, the masked man placing them coolly in a leather bag slung around him.

"Is that all?" he asked when the contributions had ceased.

"Yes," all answered.

"Very well; stand where you are."

Then turning to his companions he added:

"Now, boys, go through the baggage."

All this time the driver was sitting in his seat, his hands held above his head, and covered by a revolver in the hand of one of the ruffians. In a short time the mail-bags were secured, and the rest of the baggage opened, and anything of value appropriated; then the man who seemed to be the leader of the outlaws addressed the stage-driver:

"You can go ahead now," he said.

Shrill cries of protest arose from the two female prisoners.

"You surely are not going to hold us prisoners?" Maxwell said.

"Oh, now, by Jove, you know that is too bad, you know," Aylward protested.

"You had all best shut up your jaws, if you know when you're well off, and make up your minds to the fact you won't ride to Placerville on that stage to-night."

Then turning to his men, he gave some rapid commands, and in a few minutes more the hands of the two male prisoners were tied behind their backs and their eyes blindfolded, while the females were lifted on the saddles in front of two of the outlaws. The stage-driver had not waited for any second permission to leave, but at once gathered up his lines and started. He was already out of sight around a turn in the road.

The outlaws placed a rope with a ring-noose on the end around the neck of their male prisoners, and thus leading them along, the party struck off the highway into a path leading to the hills. For a mile or more they went on until the path grew too uneven for the horses' footing, and then, in obedience to the leader's orders, four of the outlaws dismounted, and removing the rope from the Englishman's neck, led him along for a quarter of a mile or so further, when the entrance to a cave was reached.

The Englishman accompanied the outlaw inside of the cave, where he stopped before a heavy wooden door fixed in the wall. Opening it, the rascal told the prisoner to enter, and he found himself in a sort of alcove, separated from the rest of the cavern by the door. In the cell thus formed was a rude wooden bench, covered with a blanket, and a rough table, on which stood a lamp.

Several hours passed when a key was placed in the lock. The Englishman assumed an attitude like that of a tiger about to spring upon his prey. Another moment and the door was opened. It was a jailer, bringing some bread and water.

Hardly had he crossed the threshold than the Englishman had hurled himself upon him, bearing him to the floor, his fingers grasping his throat like bands of steel. In vain the outlaw struggled and tried to call for assistance; the prisoner seemed to be possessed of superhuman strength, and choked him into insensibility.

Then, seizing his revolver and lantern, he sprang to his feet. The next moment he had passed from the cell into the outer cavern.

A ring with several keys was in the lock outside, and closing the door he locked it and thrust the keys in his pocket. Then extinguishing the lantern he stood for a moment or two in doubt how to act next, then stole away.

For a hundred yards he went on; then his hand encountered wood-work. A moment's examination was sufficient to show him it was a door similar to the one of the cell from which he had just escaped. As he made this discovery, he thought he heard the sound of a voice within. Placing his ear close to the door, he listened. From beyond the door came the sound of a sobbing voice raised in prayer in a woman's voice.

In another moment he had opened the door and entered the cell. During his own confinement he had found several matches in his pocket. He had saved them, thinking they might prove more useful to him in the future than they were then. Striking one, he lighted the lantern. Casting its rays around, he saw that the cell was a little larger, but formed in the same way as the one in which he had been placed. In one corner stood a narrow cot. Standing beside it in a startled attitude, as if she had just sprang to her feet, was a young girl, poorly dressed, and her hair hung in wavy masses over her shoulders, yet the young man, even in the faint light thrown by the lantern, could not help noticing how rarely beautiful she was.

"Do not be alarmed, miss," he said; "I am a friend."

The girl clasped her hands.

"A friend!" she cried. "Have you come to release me from this horrible place?"

"I am a prisoner, too, and am trying to make my escape."

"Then you can pity me and will take me with you."

"Yes, if you will run the risk."

"I will run any risk," the girl answered.

"Then come. Take my hand, for we must extinguish the light."

The girl sprang forward and grasped his hand; then extinguishing the light the young man led her out of the cell.

"Come, now," he said.

As he spoke he once more commenced feeling his way along the wall.

Suddenly the young man's hand encountered more woodwork. It was another door, and an idea flashed through his mind. Rapidly he tried the keys upon the ring in the lock. The second one turned it; and the next moment the door was opened, and he and the girl had passed through. He struck a match, and lighted the lantern. As he did so an exclamation of pleasure left his lips. The door gave admittance not to a cell, but to a narrow passage.

He had caught sight of an iron bar projecting from the wall, and placing the lantern in the girl's hand, he seized the bar and bore his weight upon it. An opening appeared in the seemingly solid wall through which the daylight poured. By an ingenious mechanism the ponderous block of stone was swung on a pivot to conceal the secret egress from the cavern. As the young man realized this, he uttered an exclamation of triumph.

"Eureka!" he cried. "We have found it at last!"

In another moment both had passed through the opening. Looking around they saw that it was in the face of a high bluff. In front of them was a long, level stretch of country, thinly covered with a growth of stunted trees.

Seizing the girl's hand, the young man at once started for the cover of the trees. But the girl uttered a cry of pain, and fell to the ground.

"I have sprained my ankle," she moaned, "and can go no farther. Leave me, and save yourself."

The young man's only answer was to raise her in his arms and dash onward. They finally came to a sort of natural trench, concealed from view of any person standing above. Into this trench the detective assisted the girl, and then crawled beside her.

At this time the sun was about two hours high.

"Pardon me," Dudleigh said, "but I have not asked how your ankle feels."

"It is very painful, but I do not mind it. I would endure anything for thankfulness that I have escaped. How can I ever express my gratitude to you, for if you had not released me I could never have hoped to escape?"

"Do not mention it," Dudleigh said hastily, "but tell me how you came to be in the power of those scoundrels."

"The man whom they call their captain pretended to love me."

"Captain Midnight?"

"Yes, that is what he is called; but few people know his real name."

"Do you?"

"Yes; though not until I was taken to the cavern did I find out that he and the leader of the outlaws were the same."

"What is his real name?"

"They call him Colonel Gordon, and he owns a mine near Nugget Gulch."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes. As I say, I did not know he and Captain Midnight were the same until I was taken to the cavern, though Gordon has long persecuted me with his attentions."

"Your home is near here then?"

"It was until a few days ago. Then my uncle sold out his claims and started for the east."

"Leaving you behind?"

"He did not want to take me with him, though I begged hard for him to do so. Instead, he sent me to stay with his sister in San Francisco until he returned."

"Why did you not go?"

"I did start; but on the way the coach was stopped by those road-agents, and I was taken to the cavern."

"Then you discovered that Midnight and Gordon were the same persons?"

"Yes."

"How long ago was that?"

"A little over a week."

"And your uncle had no way of knowing of your capture?"

"No. He started for the East on the same day."

"Were you cruelly treated by the outlaws?"

"No; beyond being left in the darkness. I had enough to eat; but Gordon swore I should never leave the cell in which he placed me until I consented to become his wife."

"You lived with your uncle then?" Dudleigh asked, after a pause.

"Yes; my father died when I was a child, and my mother went to keep house for my uncle. About two years ago my mother also died."

For a few moments the detective was silent. As he looked at her he was struck afresh with admiration at her beauty. Though not over sixteen, or seventeen at the most, her figure was fully molded in the lines of beauty. Her hair was of the most delicate tint of gold, her complexion fair as a lily, while her eyes were a dark-deep, expressive blue.

"What is your uncle's name?" he asked, at length.

"Jarvis."

"And your own?"

"Mine is Nelson—Alice Nelson."

The detective started as a sudden idea passed through his mind. The name of the woman and her child to whom the jewels he was trying to recover had been bequeathed was Nelson; the incidents of her story tallied with those told on her death-bed by the woman who had wronged the mother and child. Was it possible that chance had thrown him into the way of the real heiress?

"You do not remember your father?" he asked.

"No; I was too young—little more than an infant when he died."

"But your mother has told you of him?"

"No," the girl again answered. "It always grieved her to speak of him, and even when I was a child I forbore doing so, knowing that it pained her because she had loved him so much."

The detective put a different interpretation on this reticence on the woman's part, but he made no comment, and again asked if her ankle still pained.

"Yes," the girl answered, "very much."

"Then remove your shoe and stocking while I go and see if there is no way of getting out of this place. At present we are almost as much prisoners as if we were still in the cavern."

"But had you better not wait until night?" the girl answered. "The outlaws may see you."

"I will try to keep out of their way," the detective answered. "If we wait till night we will have to also stay till the morning.

This was true—for except by climbing to the ground above or leaping into the chasm, there seemed to be no way of getting out of their present position. Crawling out of the trench, Dudleigh seized the bushes with his hands and began to climb to the level ground above.

How could he ever manage to get the girl up with her useless ankle? If he had a rope he could accomplish it, but that was almost equivalent to saying that if she was beside him there would be no need to devise any means for bringing her up. For several moments he stood in thought.

Then he crept towards the cavern. Reaching the egress by which the girl and himself had escaped, he found it had been closed. He determined to reconnoiter. Stealthily he made his way in the direction from which the outlaws had come, and turning an angle of the rocks, he saw about a dozen horses, each fastened with a lariat.

In another moment or two he had severed one of the riatas with his knife close to the stake around which it was coiled. Then turning, he led the horse along the path he had come. In a short time the edge of the chasm was reached.

Cutting a few feet off the end of the lariat, he tied the horse to one of the trees; then uncoiling the line, he found it was between forty and fifty feet in length. Securely fastening one end to the trunk of a tree that grew at an angle over the edge of the chasm, he let the other end drop. He had marked the spot where he had ascended from the ledge, and knew it would fall in exactly the place he intended it should; and grasping the lasso in his hands he began to descend. In several seconds he landed safely upon the concealed ledge on which Alice lay. She uttered an expression of thankfulness as she saw him.

"I was so afraid you would again be captured," she said.

"I am still safe, as you see," he replied. "Does your ankle still pain you as much as it did?"

The girl had removed her stocking, showing a foot white and perfectly shaped as a sculptor's model.

The ankle, however, was badly swollen, and from the way she winced when she attempted to place it on the ground, it was evident it pained her badly. "I do not think it does hurt quite so much," she answered bravely.

"That is right," Dudleigh said. "Keep up your courage a little longer and we will be all right. Now let me assist you to rise, and if you can at all endure the pain, you must do so. Our liberty, and perhaps our lives, depend upon it."

He took her hands as he spoke and assisted her to rise.

"Now place your arms around my neck," he said, turning his back to her.

She did so, and then cutting a few feet off the lariat, Dudleigh passed it around both her wrist and his own.

"Now clasp me beneath the arms, instead of above," he said.

The girl obeyed, and the next moment the detective had grasped the lariat and began to ascend, hand over hand.

At length he reached the ground above in safety, and for a moment he felt that he must faint from sheer exhaustion. Quickly recovering, however, he severed the cord that bound the girl to him and laid her gently on the sward. Then drawing up the lariat, he began to improvise a bridle for the horse, and raised the girl in his arm.

"You must be my guide now," he said, "for I am quite unacquainted with the country."

By this time the sun was setting beyond the distant range of mountains. The girl looked towards it.

"Strike out in that direction," she said, pointing with her hand, "and we will meet the road to Placerville."

Without making any reply, Dudleigh lifted her upon the horse's back, and then mounting himself, supported her with his arm, and turned the animal's head in the direction she had indicated.

CHAPTER NINE

BAFFLED

THE detective heard voices behind them and urged the horse forward. He knew that the outlaws had found out that he and the girl had escaped and had taken the horse.

At length the highway was reached. As they turned into it their pursuers caught sight of them.

"We will have to fight for it," Dudleigh said. "Can you fire a revolver?"

"Yes," the girl answered eagerly; "I am a good shot."

"Then take one of mine."

The girl did so, while the detective urged the wearied horse onward. For a quarter of an hour or so they went on, when a bullet came whistling toward them, and with a snort of pain the horse fell forward. The detective leaped to the ground, barely escaping being crushed by the falling animal, and, with the girl still in his arms, sought the shelter of a huge boulder that stood beside the road.

A shout broke from the outlaws as they saw the success of their shot.

"It must be a fight now," he said, as he placed the girl on the ground beside him.

"Yes," Alice answered; "I never will be taken back to that horrible cavern."

"We have no shots to waste, remember," Dudleigh whispered. "Be sure you make every one count."

As he spoke he raised his own weapon.

The spiteful report was followed by a cry of agony, and the foremost of the ruffians fell forward on his horse's neck. A volley from the outlaws answered the shot, but the bullets flattened themselves against the boulder, leaving the two fugitives untouched.

Suddenly, however, the blended reports of a half-dozen rifles broke the silence.

The outlaws evidently did not relish this interruption to their game, for they turned their horses' heads and fled at full speed. The other party dashed after them, rapidly discharging their weapons. If the outlaws had had the advantage a short time before the tables were turned now, but in less than half an hour the party of horsemen came riding back. Knowing they were friends, Dudleigh and Alice awaited their return.

"We arrived just in time to save you from being wiped out, I guess," the leader of the party chuckled.

"You did, indeed," Dudleigh answered. "We were just about at the last gasp."

"How did you come to get them after you?"

"They held us prisoners in their cavern and we managed to make our escape, but they found it out sooner than we wanted, and pursued us."

"You know where the cavern is then?"

"Yes."

"Can you lead us to it?"

"Certainly."

"Then you must do so."

"But this young lady has sprained her ankle, and suffers great pain, she must be taken to some place of safety first."

"Well then, we'll wait here until the stage comes along and she can get into it. I'm Dan Hill, the sheriff of this county, and I'm bound to wipe out that gang."

To this proposal the detective had no objection to offer, and in about half an hour the stage came along. Alice was placed in it, and then, under the guidance of the detective, the party proceeded to the cave. They found it unoccupied, however, and they rode back to Placerville, arriving there about midnight.

Alice had already been cared for, and was in bed at the hotel. The detective was quite destitute of money, and sent a cipher telegram to New York asking for some. It was afternoon the following day before the telegraphic draft arrived. He had no trouble in getting it cashed, and prepared to take his departure on the evening stage.

Since the girl's revelation that Captain Midnight was none other than Gordon, he was satisfied that the capture of Danton and his female accomplices at the same time as himself was only a ruse, and they had again resumed their journey.

The rest had done wonders for Alice's ankle, and she resolved to accept his escort to San Francisco. Before leaving, Dudleigh took Dan Hill aside and informed him he was a detective.

"Let me give you a hint," he said. "You know Gordon, of Nugget Gulch?"

"Yes."

"Unless I am much mistaken, he and Captain Midnight are the same."

The sheriff was incredulous, but promised to keep it in mind, and half an hour later the detective and Alice left the town. They traveled as rapidly as possible, but it was two days before they reached the nearest line of railroad, and another night and day before they arrived in San Francisco. During the journey the detective had grown to

admire Alice greatly, and had it not been for the case on which he was engaged, he would have wished the distance greater. As it was, it seemed to him their destination never would be reached.

His first duty on arriving in San Francisco was to take Alice to her aunt's house and leave her in her care. The girl's eyes filled with tears as he parted from her.

"How can I ever express my gratitude?" she asked.

"The happiness of having been of service to you more than repays me," Dudleigh answered.

"But you will come and see me again?" Alice asked anxiously.

"When I return—if I ever do—I certainly shall," he answered; "but when that may be I cannot tell. I may have to go around the world before I see you again."

Dudleigh had never told her that he was a detective, or that he intended going farther than San Francisco. Alice looked her surprise.

"Around the world?" she repeated.

"Perhaps. I have a mission to accomplish, and if I am successful I will have a great surprise in store for you."

His meaning, of course, was quite unintelligible to the girl, but she asked for no explanation, and after a few more words of farewell he took his departure. He proceeded direct to the office of Wells Fargo & Co., and asked to see the manager. He was shown into his private office, when he asked:

"Has a draft drawn by Henry Aylward for fifteen thousand dollars been presented to you?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"The day before yesterday."

"And was protested?"

"Certainly. We had no account with any such person."

"That is what I knew."

"You knew?" the manager repeated in surprise. "Who are you?"

"A detective."

"Ah, then, perhaps you know who drew the draft?"

"I do."

"Who was it?"

"First tell me if you know who presented it?"

"An English nobleman—Lord Lennox."

"Lord Lennox?"

"Yes. He was badly bitten, it seems, for he cashed it for the scoundrel."

"Has this Lord Lennox an account with you?"

"No; but a few weeks ago a valuable package was sent to us from New York to await his application for it."

"And he has received it?"

"Yes."

"Who vouched for his identity?"

"Several people. Among others the British Consul."

"Ah!" Dudleigh said. "Do you know where the nobleman is staying?"

"At the Palace Hotel, I believe."

"Thank you for your information," Dudleigh said, rising. "It may prove invaluable to me."

"Stay a moment," the manager said. "You have not told me who drew the draft upon us."

"I did it partly as a decoy and partly because I had no choice. Now I will tell you something else. This man who calls himself Lord Lennox is no more English or a nobleman than I am. He is a crook of the first water, and I am after him and his two female accomplices, whom he passes off as his wife and daughter. The package you delivered to him contained stolen jewels worth five hundred thousand dollars."

Leaving the manager overwhelmed with astonishment, Dudleigh left the office and made his way to the office of the British Consul.

"I wish to make some inquiries respecting a certain Lord Lennox," he said, "I believe you are acquainted with him."

"Oh, yes; I know him well," the consul replied, with pride in being supposed to be on intimate terms with persons of rank. "A splendid fellow he is, and one of the richest of the Scotch peers."

"Indeed," Dudleigh said. "May I ask you how you became acquainted with him?"

The consul got red in the face.

"Really, sir——" he began.

"Do not think me impertinent," Dudleigh interrupted. "I am a detective, and I ask for purely professional reasons."

"Indeed—well—that is to say, I have not known him long. In fact, he had a letter of introduction to me from a friend of mine, Colonel Gordon, one of the bonanza kings of Nevada."

"Ah!" the detective said, "that is all I wanted to know and I thank you for the information. Can you tell me if Lord Lennox is still in the city?"

"No; he sailed with Lady and Miss Lennox yesterday for China."

Dudleigh left the office.

CHAPTER TEN

STILL AT FAULT

MAKING inquiries, the detective learned that the next steamer for China did not sail for a week.

The delay made his chances of bagging his game and recovering the stolen jewels much less, but as he had told Alice, he was determined if necessary to follow them around the world. The time hung heavy on his hands, although he managed to pass a good deal of it in the company of Alice.

The girl was delighted when she found the date of his departure was postponed; while her aunt, who had heard the whole story of the rescue from her own lips, made him heartily welcome.

Still, he experienced a feeling of great relief when the day for the sailing of the steamer arrived. Before going on board he assumed the disguise of an old man, intending to still wear it when he reached China; and as his eyes were concealed by glasses no person would ever have suspected his identity.

The three weeks of the passage seemed very tedious, but at last they reached Shanghai. During the time they had waited at Yeddo he had assured himself that Danton and his companions had not disembarked there, and on arriving in Shanghai he had further proof in their names on the register of the European Hotel. According to the book, they had stayed there three days, and as he read the names he uttered a well-affected expression of surprise.

"What!" he exclaimed, "my old friend Lord Lennox. Is it possible he is here?"

"He was," the clerk answered, "but he left the day before yesterday."

"Ah! on his way to England, I suppose?"

"He, with Lady Lennox and their daughter, went on a tour into the interior. They intend to return in about a week, I believe."

"Then I shall have the pleasure of seeing them when

they return," Dudleigh said, and without making any further remarks, he proceeded to the office of the American Consul.

Making his profession known, also producing the necessary documents to prove his assertions, he acquainted the consul with the particulars of the case.

"They must be an ingenious set of rascals," the consul remarked, when he had finished.

"They are, indeed."

"And what do you want me to do?"

"Find me an intelligent interpreter."

"I know the very man you need, but how can he assist you?"

"By accompanying me into the country."

"You are going to follow them there?"

"Certainly."

"But do you think they have really gone there?"

"I am almost certain of it—not far, perhaps, but just far enough to change their disguises, and so avert any suspicion on their return."

"What would they gain by that?"

"Everything. They have too much sense not to know that their imposture will soon be discovered. In another disguise, and as ordinary travelers, they would experience little difficulty in reaching India, and from thence to Europe."

"You are right," the consul admitted. "Call back in a couple of hours and I will have the interpreter waiting for you. He is one of the most intelligent Chinamen I have ever seen. He speaks English as well almost as you or I."

Leaving the consul's office, Dudleigh spent the intervening couple of hours making inquiries regarding the supposed nobleman's route of travel until he had it down fine. At the expiration of the time he again presented himself at the consul's office. He found a young Chinaman waiting.

"This is Hing Lee, the interpreter," the consul said. "Hing, this is the gentleman who wants to hire you."

Without the least touch of the usual pidgin-English, Hing Lee replied:

"I will try and serve the gentleman well."

"That is right," the consul said; "Mr. Dudleigh, Hing is a Christian."

Again Hing bowed, and the detective proceed to explain what he wanted him to do. The Chinaman expressed his perfect comprehension of the duties required, and in less than an hour the two were driving in a vehicle of native build, behind a raw-boned native pony, along the route taken by Danton and his companions.

As they went on, Hing made inquiries at all the villages and taverns regarding the party, and the answers received assured them they were on the right track. About sundown they came to a small village, and on making the usual inquiries, Hing received a storm of voluble answers.

"What is the matter?" Dudleigh asked.

"They say that the gentleman and the two ladies came here, and that the evil gods came in the night from the ruined temple and carried them away."

"Question him further," the detective suggested.

Hing Lee did so.

"They say that they came to sleep in the tavern and went to bed, but when the household woke up in the morning they were gone."

"And they think evil gods came and carried them away?"

"Yes; the evil gods of the ruined temple."

"Where is the ruined temple?"

"It is about a mile outside the village. It is the temple of the evil gods, and no one dares cross its threshold."

"And it is quite deserted?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Tell the people we will stay here to-night."

Hing Lee did so, and as it began to grow dark, the detective said:

"Will you come with me to the ruined temple to-night?"

Hing Lee's face assumed an expression of consternation.

"I dare not," he replied.

"Why not?"

"It would be death, according to Chinese belief."

"I thought you said you were a Christian?"

"I do not fear the evil gods."

"Why, then, are you afraid?"

"Because it is against the law. All who go there are impaled alive."

The detective took a handful of gold from his pocket.

"I will give you this if you come," he said.

Hing Lee's eyes glistened; it was evident his cupidity was excited.

"I will go, though I risk my life."

Two hours later they started. Connecting the story of the traveler's mysterious disappearance with the theory he had already formed, the detective had come to the conclusion that the ruined temple, to cross the threshold of which both by law and superstition was death, had something to do with it. Perhaps they might even then be in hiding there. The temple though called ruined did not present that appearance; it looked stern and sinister, as the detective and the Chinaman approached it. The door, which was reached by a flight of massive steps, stood open, and passing through they found themselves in a vast apartment, the roof supported by massive stone pillars.

The lantern that the detective carried shed but a sickly light through the profound gloom. Their footsteps on the stone floor made a noise that echoed through the whole building. Notwithstanding his professed Christianity, the solitude and darkness had its effect upon Hing Lee's superstitious fears, and he would have turned and fled had not Dudleigh restrained him. On they went, the detective with his revolver in one hand and the lantern in the other, until the altar was reached.

Ranged around on massive pedestals were idols of grotesque forms, that in the flickering light of the lantern seemed to feel a thrill of life, and frown upon the intruders.

Suddenly the detective uttered an exclamation. Upon the floor in front of the largest idol were the ashes of a fire. It told of late human occupancy of the temple, and casting the rays of the lantern further through the darkness he also discovered several articles of male and female attire, as also a wig and false beard. He also found a card that bore the inscription: "The Hon. Lord Lennox."

There could be no doubt that the worthy trio he was tracking had used the ruined temple as a dressing-room, but as before he was a day behind the pair, and for the present, at any rate, they had again slipped through his fingers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

THE detective had found out all he wanted to know. There was nothing to be gained by staying in the temple any longer. He was confident that the accomplices had returned to Shanghai, and it was there he would have to look for them.

"Come," he said, turning to Hing Lee; "I do not want to stay here any longer."

Hing Lee was only too glad to hear the words, and in a very few moments more they stood outside of the temple.

"You have earned your gold," the detective said, as they walked back to the village. "Now you must get the jinriksha, and we will return to the city."

In less than an hour they were on the road to Shanghai. It was evident Hing Lee was much mystified at the detective's proceeding, but he asked no questions. Eight o'clock the next morning they reached the city. Proceeding to the hotel, Dudleigh looked over the shipping list, and found that no European steamer had sailed for two days. In that case the three accomplices must still be in the city. He saw, however, that a steamer for Singapore sailed that day at noon. Proceeding to the steamship company's office, he asked for and examined the list of passengers.

Among them were the names:

"Harold Gordon, wife and sister."

Intuition told him these were the identical three he was after. Going to the American Consul's office he informed him of his suspicions. The consul's face assumed a puzzled look.

"Do you wish to arrest them?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"I am afraid there will be some difficulty in getting the sanction of the Chinese authorities to arrest."

"Why?"

"I do not know; but it seems to be part of their theory of legislation to raise obstacles to everything."

"But you will use your influence to get it?"

"Certainly. I will go with you now to the proper authorities."

The consul at once accompanied him to the chief mandarin and laid the matter before him. That high personage at once gave an emphatic denial to the request.

"It will have to be submitted to the emperor," he said.

"But in the meantime they will have left the country," the consul protested.

The mandarin signified that that did not matter to him, and that the audience was at an end.

"It is as I anticipated," the consul said. "I only know of one chance."

"What is that?"

"I will go to the British consul and ask him to use his influence. England stands better in the estimation of these pig-headed Mongolians at present than we do."

They accordingly proceeded to the office of the British consul, and, on his accompanying them, the mandarin granted them a fresh audience. He was stubborn in his refusal to give his sanction to the arrest, however, and the British consul said:

"The only thing you can do is to go on the same steamer to Singapore. Once there the authorities will recognize your warrant immediately."

This seemed to be the only plan, when suddenly an idea struck the detective.

"If they had committed an offense against the Chinese laws there would be no trouble in having them arrested?" he asked.

"No."

"Then I will make a charge against them."

"What for?"

"For having desecrated a sacred temple."

Dudleigh accordingly said through the interpreter:

"The people are also enemies to the emperor. They have desecrated a sacred temple."

Instantly the mandarin's manner changed, and he swelled with authority. Without asking for any further information he told his scribe to write out a warrant, and then ordering a squad of native troops told the officer to accompany the American and arrest the persons he pointed out to them. By this time it was close on noon. There was no time to be lost, and the troops, accompanied by the two consuls and the detective, proceeded to the dock at which the steamer for Singapore was lying. As they reached it the gang-planks were being hauled in, but on seeing the British consul the captain gave the order to wait. Ranging his men in line on the dock, the Chinese officer accompanied the others on board. The British consul drew the captain of the steamer aside.

"This gentleman," he said, pointing to Dudleigh, "is an American detective who has followed three criminals from his own country. He has a warrant for their arrest, but the Chinese authorities would not sanction it until he made a charge against them for breaking some local law."

"What are their names?" the captain asked.

"They have shipped under those of Harold Gordon, wife, and sister."

After a few words of explanation, the captain led the way to the deck. As they reached it the detective saw Danton, Clara Melville and Mag standing in a group together. They wore no disguise, but appeared in their own proper characters. The detective advanced towards them.

"You are my prisoners," he said.

For a moment Danton stood silent and motionless; then a fearful oath left his lips. At the same moment he drew a revolver from his breast, and leveling it at the detective, fired. For a moment or two Dudleigh staggered, while a thin crimson stream trickled down his face. The bullet had grazed his forehead, and with a curse at the ill success of his shot, Danton again pressed the trigger. This time the bullet whistled past the detective's head, but before he could fire again Dudleigh had drawn his own weapon. The bullet sped true to its aim, and Danton fell to the deck.

With a wild cry of horror, Clara threw herself upon the prostrate body.

"They have killed you, my own, my own love!" she cried.

Then she arose, clutching at her heart, for the shock of seeing Danton wounded had aroused an old malady with which she had been afflicted.

Without so much as a single groan she fell back on the deck dead of heart-disease.

For a moment or two all stood horror-stricken, then stepping towards Mag, the detective seized her arm.

"You are my prisoner," he said.

The woman attempted no resistance; indeed, from the first she stood in a dazed sort of way.

"Where are the jewels?" Dudleigh asked.

"In a valise in Danton's cabin," was the reply.

Danton, who had only been stunned by Dudleigh's bullet, now regained his feet and stood looking on in a dazed manner.

The detective motioned to the Chinese officers, who seized Danton and Mag, and took them to jail. Clara's body was removed.

Half an hour later the steamer sailed, leaving three of her intended passengers behind.

Mag's information had been correct; the jewels were found in the valise in Danton's cabin, and when they

were opened in the presence of the American and British consuls it was found their value had not been overestimated.

The story of the arrest and the tragedy that followed created a great sensation; but Dudleigh had no desire for notoriety and, dropping his disguise and reassuming his proper name, he returned on the next steamer to America, without any of his fellow-passengers for a moment suspecting his real character.

Arrived in San Francisco, he only waited long enough to pay a visit to Alice and get her uncle's eastern address; then he went to New York and delivered the jewels to Hervey Morton.

During his absence a notorious burglar had been taken, and he confessed he was the husband of Mag, who had engaged as a servant in the house of Morton's aunt to find out the safest way of burglarizing it. She had overheard the story told to her nephew, and knowing that Clara Melville, who was an unscrupulous adventuress, lived in the same house as Morton, she had told her of it, and Clara having previously discovered the secret drawer of the cabinet had no difficulty in carrying out the scheme.

Danton was Clara's lover, who had been taken into their confidence, and it was he who had suggested the outline of the scheme that was afterwards carried out. They had intended going by way of China and India to Europe, and there disposing of the jewels, when Gordon, who was Mag's brother, and Mag's husband were to receive their share of the spoils. Whether Gordon intended to play them false and, marrying the heiress, peach upon his pals and secure the whole of the booty for himself, is a matter of conjecture. Whether he did or not, does not matter much, as within a week after Dudleigh's departure he was hanged by Dan Hill and his band of vigilantes.

There was plenty of proof forthcoming that Alice was the rightful heiress to the jewels, and accompanied by Morton, Dudleigh returned to San Francisco, and the nephew fulfilled his aunt's dying wishes by placing them in her hands.

The reason of the bequest was carefully kept from her knowledge, and though she could not wholly realize its immense value, she was delighted with the jewels.

"But they are more yours than they are mine," she said to Dudleigh, as she sat with him before her. "They would have been lost if it had not been for you; and if you had not saved my life of what use would they be to me? You must take half, anyway."

"If I were to take them all," he answered, "I would give them all back again for something far more precious."

"What is that?" she asked, blushing.

"Your love," Dudleigh answered, placing his arm around her.

She did not answer for a moment or two; then she looked shyly into his face and answered:

"You have that already."

Our next feature story is by the well-known writer, May Halsey Miller, and it deals with German propaganda and German cussedness during the big war.

REGENT DIAMOND'S ODD STORY

THERE is an interesting story told of the great Regent diamond, now owned by the French government. Thomas Pitt, the grandfather of the great William Pitt, Lord Chatham, purchased the stone while governor for the East India Company, and sent it to England in charge of his son Robert.

Pitt first heard of it in the summer of 1701, and about December of that year Jamchund, one of the best-known native merchants, brought the diamond to him at Madras, and offered to sell it for two hundred thousand pagodas. Pitt would not offer him more than thirty thousand, so the negotiations came to a close. In February Jamchund offered Pitt the diamond for one hundred thousand pagodas. Pitt beat him down to fifty-five thousand and raised his own offer to forty-five thousand. Jamchund would not agree, and they took a friendly leave.

An hour later Jamchund reappeared and offered the diamond for fifty thousand pagodas. Pitt raised his offer to forty-seven thousand five hundred pagodas. Jamchund, after long haggling, came down to forty-eight thousand (about $100,000), and Pitt closed with him.

According to modern ideas, Pitt's "grand affair," as he called it, conducted by a man in his position, might be regarded as of doubtful propriety. But the company raised no objection, their only fear being that Pitt's purchase might bring them into collision with the native authorities.

Pitt calculated that when the diamond was cut it would weigh about 300 carats and be worth £450 which he declared was "cheap as neck-beef." Some monarch, he thought, would be the "fairest chapman" for it; and he preferred that it should be purchased for the crown of England. For the English crown he would make some abatement, but under no circumstances was it to be sold "to a club of people that shall make more advantage of it than myself, who has run the greatest of risks to purchase it."

In 1703 these risks began to grow more serious. Never was man more tormented by a treasure. His letters from India palpitate with his fears. He dreaded being robbed by the jeweler who cut it, or even by his own agents. Having intrusted it to his son Robert and Sir Stephen Evance, he subsequently ordered them to hand it to his cousin, George Pitt. About Robert he wrote:

"I am not a little jealous, too, of my son, who has already been too bold with me on several occasions; therefore pray, take care now that he does not strip me."

Rumors affecting Evance's credit threw him into an agony of alarm. Bitter, too, was his disappointment when he found that the stone had been reduced by cutting from 410 to 137 carats.

Finally, in 1717, the Duke of Orleans, regent during the infancy of Louis XV, agreed to buy it for the French crown. Pitt, accompanied by his sons and his son-in-law, Cholmondeley, carried it over to Calais, where it was delivered to the jeweler appointed to receive it. Pitt in a letter to his son Robert wrote:

"I cannot help impertinent fools meddling with my business that they had nothing to do with. The stone was sold for 2,000,000 livres (£135,000). I received the third of the money, and the remainder in four payments, every six months, with 5 per cent interest; for security of which I have crown jewels, four parcels, one to be delivered at each payment."

ONE NIGHT IN A GAMBLING-HOUSE

BY SANDY McNABB.

MY fortune lost to a crooked gambler compelled me to enter the ranks of the Metropolitan Police. The attention of the chief was attracted toward me by the ingenuity which I was supposed to have manifested in the detection of a fraud upon a tradesman of London. The chief sent for me, and hinted that he might shortly need my services in other affairs requiring intelligence and resolution.

Three days elapsed before I received the expected summons. On waiting on him, I was agreeably startled to find that I was to be employed on a mission which the most sagacious and experienced of detective-officers would have felt honored to undertake.

"Here is a written description of a gang of blacklegs, swindlers and forgers," concluded the commissioner, summing up his instructions. "It will be your object to discover their private haunts, and secure legal evidence of their nefarious practices. We have been baffled, through the hasty zeal of the officers employed: you must especially avoid that error. They are practised scoundrels, and it will require considerable patience to bring them to justice. One of their more recent victims is young Mr. Merton, son, by a former marriage, of the Dowager Lady Everton. Her ladyship has applied to us for assistance in extricating him from the toils in which he is meshed. Call on her at five o'clock this afternoon, in plain clothes, and obtain whatever information on the subject she may be able to afford. Remember to communicate directly with me; and any assistance you may require shall be promptly rendered." With these, and a few other minor directions, I was dismissed to a task which, difficult and possibly perilous as it might prove, I hailed as a delightful relief from the dull routine of ordinary duty.

I hastened home; and after dressing with great care I proceeded to Lady Everton's mansion. I was immediately marshaled to the drawing-room, where I found her ladyship and her daughter—a beautiful girl—awaiting my arrival. Lady Everton appeared greatly surprised at my appearance, differing, as I did, from her abstract idea of a policeman, however attired or disguised. It was not till she had perused the note of which I was the bearer, that her haughty and incredulous stare became mitigated to a glance of lofty condescendent civility.

"Be seated, Mr. Waters," said her ladyship, waving me to a chair. "This note informs me that you have been selected for the duty of endeavoring to extricate my son from the perilous entanglements in which he has involved himself."

I was about to reply—for I was silly enough to feel somewhat nettled at the noble lady's haughtiness of manner—that I was engaged in the public service of extirpating a gang of swindlers with whom her son had involved himself. And I wish to add I was there to procure any information she might possess likely to forward so desirable a result. But fortunately the remembrance of my actual position, spite of my gentleman's attire, flashed vividly upon my mind. Instead of permitting my glib tongue to wag irreverently in the presence of a right honorable, I bowed with deferential acquiescence.

Her ladyship proceeded, and I in substance obtained the following information:

Charles Merton, during the few months which had elapsed since the attainment of his majority, had very literally "fallen amongst thieves." A passion for gambling seemed to have taken entire possession of his being. Almost every day, as well as night, of his life was passed at play. A run of ill-luck, according to his own belief—but in very truth a run of downright robbery—had set in against him. He had not only dissipated all the ready money which he inherited, and the large sums which the foolish indulgence of his lady-mother had supplied, but had involved himself in bonds, bills, and other obligations to a frightful amount. The principal agent in effecting this ruin was one Sandford—a man of fashionable and dashing exterior, and the presiding spirit of the knot of desperadoes whom I was commissioned to hunt. Strange to say, Mr. Merton had the blindest reliance upon this man's honor. Even now—tricked, despoiled as he had been by him and his gang—he relied upon Sandford's counsel and assistance for escape from the desperate position in which he was involved. The Everton estate had passed to a distant relative of the late lord; so that ruin, absolute and irremediable, stared both the wretched dupe and his relatives in the face. Lady Everton's jointure was not a very large one, and her son had been permitted to squander sums which should have been devoted to the discharge of claims which were now pressed harshly against her.

I listened with the deepest interest to Lady Everton's narrative. Repeatedly she alluded to the manners and appearance of Sandford, who had been introduced by Mr. Merton to his mother and sister, and a suspicion, which the police papers had first awakened, that the gentleman in question was an old acquaintance of my own, flashed across my mind. This surmise I of course kept to myself. After emphatically cautioning the ladies to keep our proceedings a profound secret from Mr. Merton, I took my leave, amply provided with the resources requisite for carrying into effect the scheme which I had resolved upon. I also arranged that, instead of seeing her ladyship, which might excite suspicion, I should report progress by letter.

"If it should be he!" thought I, as I emerged into the street. The bare suspicion had sent the blood through my veins with furious violence. "If this Sandford be, as I suspect, that villain Cardon, success will indeed be a triumph."

Sandford, I had been instructed, was usually present at the Italian opera during the ballet; the box he generally occupied was designated in the memorandum of the police, and as I saw in the bills that a very successful piece was to be performed that evening, I determined on being present.

Entering the house a few minutes past ten o'clock, just after the commencement of the ballet, I looked eagerly around. The box in which I was instructed to seek my man was empty. The momentary disappointment was

soon repaid. Five minutes had not elapsed when Cardon entered arm-in-arm with a pale, aristocratic-looking young man, whom I had no difficulty, from his striking resemblance to a portrait in Lady Everton's drawing-room, in deciding to be Mr. Merton. My course of action was at once determined. I passed on to the opposite side of the house, and boldly entered the box. Cardon's back was towards me, and I tapped him lightly on the shoulder. He turned quickly around, and if a basilisk had confronted him, he could scarcely have exhibited greater terror and surprise. My aspect, nevertheless, was studiously bland and conciliating, and my outstretched hand seemed to invite a renewal of friendship.

"Waters!" he at last stammered, feebly accepting my proffered grasp, "who would have thought of meeting you here?"

"Not you, certainly, since you stare at an old friend as if he were some frightful goblin about to swallow you. Really——"

"Hush! Let us speak together in the lobby. An old friend," he added, in answer to Mr. Merton's surprised stare. "We will return in an instant."

"Why, what is all this, Waters?" said Cardon, recovering his wonted *sang-froid* the instant we were alone. "I understood you had retired from amongst us; were in fact—what shall I say——?"

"Ruined—done up! Nobody should know that better than you."

"My good fellow, you do not imagine——"

"I imagine nothing, my dear Cardon. I was very thoroughly done—done brown, as it is written in the vulgar tongue. But fortunately, my kind old uncle——"

"Passgrove is dead!" interrupted my old acquaintance, eagerly jumping to a conclusion, "and you are his heir! I congratulate you, my dear fellow. This is indeed a charming 'reverse of circumstances.'"

"Yes; but mind, I have given up the old game. No more dice-deviltry for me. I have promised Emily never even to touch a card again."

The cold, hard eye of the incarnate fiend gleamed mockingly as these "good intentions" of a practised gamester fell upon his ear; but he only replied:

"Very good; quite right, my dear boy. But come, let me introduce you to Mr. Merton, a highly-connected personage, I assure you. By the bye, Waters," he added, in a caressing, confidential tone, "my name, for family and other reasons, which I will hereafter explain to you, is for the present Sandford."

"Sandford!"

"Yes; do not forget. But allons, or the ballet will be over."

I was introduced in due form to Mr. Merton as an old and esteemed friend, whom he—Sandford—had not seen for many months. At the conclusion of the ballet, Sandford proposed that we should adjourn to the European Coffee-house, nearly opposite. This we agreed to, and out we sallied. At the top of the staircase we jostled against the chief, who, like us, was leaving the house. He bowed slightly to Mr. Merton's apology, and his eyes wandered briefly and coldly over our persons; but not the faintest sign of interest or recognition escaped him. I thought it possible he did not know me in my changed apparel; but looking back after descending a few steps, I was quickly undeceived. A sharp, swift glance, expressive both of encouragement and surprise, shot out from under his bushy brows, and as swiftly vanished. He did not know how little I needed spurring to the goal we had both in view.

We discussed two or three bottles of wine with much gayety and relish. Sandford, especially, was in exuberant spirits; brimming over with brilliant anecdote and sparkling badinage. He saw in me a fresh, rich prey. About half-past twelve o'clock he proposed to adjourn. This was eagerly assented to by Mr. Merton, who had for some time exhibited unmistakable symptoms of impatience and unrest.

"You will accompany us, Waters?" said Sandford, as we arose to depart. "There is, I suppose, no vow registered in the matrimonial archives against looking on at a game played by others."

"Oh, no! but don't ask me to play."

"Certainly not," and a devilish sneer curled his lip. "Your virtue shall suffer no temptation, be assured."

We soon arrived before the door of a quiet, respectable-looking house in one of the streets leading from the Strand: a low, peculiar knock, given by Sandford, was promptly answered; then a password, which I did not catch, was whispered by him through the key-hole, and we passed in.

We proceeded upstairs to the first floor, the shutters of which were carefully closed, so that no intimation of what was going on could possibly reach the street. The apartment was brilliantly lighted. A roulette table and dice and cards were in full activity; wine and liquors of all varieties were profusely paraded. There were about half a dozen persons present, I soon discovered, besides the gang. That comprised eleven or twelve well-dressed desperadoes, whose sinister aspect induced a momentary qualm lest one or more of the pleasant party might suspect or recognize my vocation. This, however, I reflected was scarcely possible. My beat, during the short period I had been on the force, was far distant from the usual haunts of such gentry, and I was otherwise unknown in London. Still, questioning glances were eagerly directed towards my introducer; and one big, burly fellow, a foreigner—the rascals were the scum of various countries—was very unpleasantly inquisitorial. "J'en reponds!" I heard Sandford say in answer to his irritated queries; and he added something in a whisper which brought a sardonic smile to the fellow's lips, and induced a total change in his demeanor towards myself. This was reassuring; for though provided with a gun, I should, I felt, have little chance with such utterly reckless ruffians as those by whom I was surrounded.

Play was proposed; and though at first stoutly refusing, I feigned to be gradually overcome by irresistible temptation, and sat down to blind hazard with my foreign friend for moderate stakes. I was graciously allowed to win; and in the end found myself richer in devil's money by about ten pounds. Mr. Merton was soon absorbed in the chances of the dice, and lost large sums, for which, when the money he had brought with him was exhausted, he gave written acknowledgments. The cheating practised upon him was really audacious; and any one but a tyro must have detected it. He, however, appeared not to entertain the slightest suspicion of the "fair play" of his opponents, guiding himself entirely by the advice of his friend and counselor, Sandford, who did not himself play. The amiable assemblage broke up about six in the morning, each person retiring singly by the back way, receiving, as he departed, a new password for the next evening.

A few hours afterwards I waited on the chief to report the state of affairs. He was delighted with the fortunate début I had made, but still strictly enjoined patience and caution. It would have been easy, as I was in possession of the password, to have surprised the confederacy in the act of gaming that very evening; but this would only

have accomplished a part of the object aimed at. Several of the fraternity, Sandford amongst the number, were suspected of uttering forged foreign bank-notes, and it was essential to watch narrowly for legal evidence to insure their conviction. It was also desirable to restore, if possible, the property and securities of which Mr. Merton had been pillaged.

Nothing of especial importance occurred for seven or eight days. Gaming went on as usual every evening, and Mr. Merton became, of course, more and more involved; even to his sister's jewels—which he had surreptitiously obtained—had been staked and lost. He was, by the advice of Sandford, about to conclude a heavy mortgage on his estate, in order not only to clear off his enormous "debts of honor," but to acquire fresh means of "winning back" that ignus-fatuus of all gamblers—his tremendous losses! A new preliminary "dodge" was, I observed, now brought into action. Mr. Merton esteemed himself a knowing hand at écarte. It was introduced, and he was permitted to win every game he played, much to the apparent annoyance and discomfiture of the losers. As this was precisely the snare into which I had myself fallen, I of course the more readily detected it, and felt quite satisfied that a grand coup was meditated. In the meantime I had not been idle. Sandford was confidently informed that I was only waiting in London to receive between four and five thousand pounds, part of Uncle Passgrove's legacy, and then intended to immediately hasten back to canny Yorkshire. To have seen the villain's eyes as I incidentally, as it were, announced my errand and intention! They fairly flashed with infernal glee!

The crisis came swiftly on. Mr. Merton's mortgage money was to be paid on the morrow; and on that day, too, I announced the fabulous thousands receivable by me were to be handed over. Mr. Merton, elated by his repeated triumps at écarte, and prompted by his friend Sandford, resolved, instead of canceling the bonds and obligations held by the conspirators, to redeem his losses by staking on that game his ready money against those liabilities. This was at first demurred to with much apparent earnestness by the winners; but Merton, warmly seconded by Sandford, insisting upon the concession, as he deemed it, it was finally agreed that écarte should be the game by which he might hope to regain the fortune.

The day so eagerly longed for by Merton and the confederates arrived; and I awaited with feverish anxiety the coming on of night. Only the chief conspirators—eight in number—were to be present; and no stranger except myself was to be admitted to this crowning triumph of successful fraud. One only hint had I ventured to give Mr. Merton, and that under a promise, "on his honor as a gentleman," of inviolable secrecy. It was this: "Be sure, before commencing play to-morrow night, that the bonds and obligations you have signed, the jewels you have lost, with a sum in notes or gold to make up an equal amount to that which you mean to risk, is actually deposited on the table." He promised to insist on this condition. It involved much more than he dreamt of.

My arrangements were at length thoroughly complete; and a few minutes past twelve o'clock the whispered password admitted me into the house. An angry altercation was going on. Merton was insisting, as I had advised, upon the exhibition of a sum equal to that which he had brought with him; for confident of winning, he was determined to recover his losses to the last farthing. Although his bonds, bills, obligations, his sister's jewels, and a large amount in gold and genuine notes, were produced, there was still a heavy sum deficient.

"Ah, by the bye!" exclaimed Sandford, as I entered, "Waters can lend you the sum for an hour or two—for a consideration," he added, in a whisper. "It will soon be returned."

"No, thank you," I answered, coldly. "I never part with my money till I have lost it."

A malignant scowl passed over the man's features, but he made no reply. Ultimately it was decided that one of the fraternity should be dispatched in search of the required amount. He was gone about half an hour, and returned with a bundle of notes. They were, as I hoped and expected, forgeries on foreign banks. Mr. Merton looked at and counted them; and play commenced.

As it went on, so vividly did the scene recall the evening that had sealed my own ruin, that I grew dizzy with excitement, and drained tumbler after tumbler of water to allay the fevered throbbing of my veins. The gamblers were fortunately too much absorbed to heed my agitation. Merton lost continuously—without pause or intermission. The stakes were doubled—trebled—quadrupled! His brain was on fire; and he played, or rather lost, with the recklessness of a madman.

"Hark! what's that?" suddenly exclaimed Sandford, from whose features the mask he had so long worn before Merton had been gradually slipping. "Did you not hear a noise below?"

My ear had caught the sound; and I could better interpret it than he. It ceased.

"Touch the signal-bell, Adolphe," added Sandford.

Not only the play, but the very breathing of the villains, was suspended as they listened for the reply.

It came. The answering tinkle sounded once, twice, thrice. "All right!" shouted Sandford. "Proceed! The farce is nearly played out."

I had instructed the officers that two of them in plain clothes should present themselves at the front-door, obtain admission by means of the password I had given them, and immediately seize and gag the door-keeper. I had also acquainted them with the proper answer to the signal-ring—three distinct pulls at the bell-handle communicating with the first door. Their comrades were then to be admitted, and they were all to silently ascend the stairs, and wait on the landing till summoned by me to enter and seize the gamesters. The back entrance to the house was also securely but unobtrusively watched.

One only fear disturbed me; it was lest the scoundrels should take alarm in sufficient time to extinguish the lights, destroy the forged papers, and possibly escape by some private passage which might, unknown to me, exist.

Ascertaining that the handle of my pistol was within easy reach—for I knew I was playing a desperate game with desperate men—I rose, stepped carelessly to the door, partially opened it, and bent forward, as if listening for a repetition of the sound which had so alarmed the company. To my great delight the landing and stairs were filled with police officers—silent and stern as death. I drew back, and walked towards the table at which Merton was seated. The last stake—an enormous one—was being played for. Merton lost. He sprang upon his feet, death-pale, despairing, overwhelmed, and a hoarse execration surged through his clenched teeth. Sandford and his associates coolly raked the plunder together, their features lighted up with glee.

"You miscreant!" shrieked Mr. Merton, as if smitten with a sudden frenzy, and darting at Sandford's throat: "you devil, you have undone, destroyed me!"

"No doubt of it," calmly replied Sandford, shaking off his victim's grasp; "and I think it has been very artis-

tically and effectually done. Snivelling will scarcely help you much."

Mr. Merton glared upon the man in speechless agony and rage.

"Not quite so fast, Cardon," I exclaimed, at the same time taking up a bundle of forged notes. "It does not appear to me that Mr. Merton has played against equal stakes, for unquestionably this paper is not genuine."

"What!" roared Sandford, "do you hold your life so cheap?" and he rushed towards me as if to seize the forged notes.

I was as quick as he, and the leveled tube of a pistol sharply arrested his eager onslaught. The entire gang gathered near us, flaming with excitement. Merton looked bewilderedly from one to another, scarcely conscious of what was passing around him.

"Wrench the papers from him!" screamed Sandford, recovering his energy. "Seize him, strangle him!"

"Look to yourself!" I shouted with equal vehemence. "Your hour is come! Officers, do you duty!"

In an instant the room was filled with police; and surprised, panic-stricken, paralyzed, by the suddenness of the castastrophe, the gang were all secured without the slightest resistance, though most of them were armed, and marched off in custody.

Three were transported for life; the rest were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. My task was effectually accomplished. My superiors were pleased to express very warm commendation of the manner in which I had acquired myself. Mr. Merton had his bonds, obligations, jewels, and money restored; and, taught wisdom by terrible experience, never again entered a gaming-house. Neither he nor his mother was ungrateful for the service I had been fortunate enough to render them.

The next issue of this magazine is going to contain several of the most cleverly written detective stories ever conceived by the most expert authors of that style of fiction. Prepare for a great treat.

SWIMMING IN SALT LAKE

DURING a visit to Salt Lake I "enjoyed" a swim on a summer afternoon, making the trip from town to Lake Point, the Coney Island of the region, on an excursion train, in company with a number of Mormons. The little railroad runs through a diversified tract, in which garden, farm, rocky uplift and mud plain are oddly jumbled, the plain being spotted with tufts of pale and bristling sage-brush that grows on the rock mountain country where nothing else will. There is a bathing pavilion at Lake Point with fresh water tanks, in which to rinse one's self after the bath, but I elected to try a swim without spectators; so walking southward along the shore for a mile or so, I found a place where the rounded rocks that formed the semblance of a beach were not too numerous.

It was a trifle difficult to keep a steady footing in the water, and at first I attributed this to inequalities on the bottom, but on getting where it was deeper I found that my legs had a disposition to come to the top, and it was apparent that the difficulty lay of wading across from the buoyancy that the body has in so dense a medium as this brine. When I had waded out so far that the water came up to my neck I scaled a boulder and dived. As it is my custom to open my eyes under water, I did so as soon as I was fairly immersed. In an instant it seemed as if vitriol had been poured into them. Springing to an upright position as soon as possible, I tried to get the salt out of them, but the more I rubbed the more it seemed to get in. Nature relieved the smart after a while by pouring through the tear-ducts enough of a milder solution of salt to clear the irritated cornea of the fluid.

There was a singular and unaccustomed sense of lightness, and it was not difficult to float high out of water, either in a reclining or sitting posture; yet a bather who is not a swimmer will fare as badly here as anywhere, for the head being heavier than the lower extremities, has a tendency to sink.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.

1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robt. C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Crittenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, By Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, by R. Ingalls
18 THE BIRD-HEADED SPHINX, by Edith S. Tupper
19 A DOUBLE MYSTERY, by Dr. Harry Enton
20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon.
26 THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE, By Pauline Carrington Bouve
27 WHO WAS GUILTY? by Beulah Poynter
28 THE EVIL EYE, by Chas. F. Oursler
29 THE THIRTEENTH DOOR, by Edith Sessions Tupper
30 THE GAME OF DETECTIVE CAREW, By Leonard Jerome
31 LAW-MAKER AND LAW-BREAKER, By Beulah Poynter
32 THE COUNTERFEIT HEIRESS, By Inspector John Harrigan

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CAUGHT WITHOUT MONEY

By L. F. BURBANK

THERE was a wild halloo, a scream, and then a crash. Two motorcycles had come into collision, two machines had been smashed and their riders thrown to the ground.

The Merriweather hill, even as far back as old staging days, had been considered dangerous. It was long and steep. Half-way between the top and the bottom the Northam road joined the main highway. A knoll and dense thicket shut off the view so that twenty feet away a traveler on one road could not see any one approaching on the other. When the Derby stage came along the driver always tooted his long brass horn, while travelers in general would yell, sing or whistle for some distance before they reached the meeting of the roads. Every one declared it dangerous, yet as an accident had never occurred there, no one made a move to make it less so, and the knoll and thicket remained. When motorcycles came to be used the hill was much discussed, and some of the riders went to the selectmen of Billings with complaints. They met with little encouragement from the town officers, who told them that this hill had been there since the world began, that the road was laid out before the Revolution, and that as there had never been an accident upon it, they reckoned it was all right for most people, and that motorcyclers who used it ought not to grumble, and must look out for themselves.

It was this want of precaution on the part of the authorities, with perhaps a little carelessness of both riders, that caused the accident which happened to Ralph Streeter and Helen Hyde. Ralph had landed in a ditch near the roadside. He was bruised and half stunned, and as he limped across the road toward the mound of hay on which the cause of his trouble was seated, he presented a sorry spectacle. A six-foot young athlete, with clothes torn, face covered with dust, and his long, thick hair in hopeless confusion, is by no means seen at his best.

"Oh, you are hurt!" cried Helen, getting up and running towards him.

"No matter about me. I am only scratched, and perhaps a trifle dusty. But are you injured?" he asked.

"No; but I had as soon be killed as frightened to death. Wasn't it lucky I fell on top of that pile of hay? Perhaps it's kept there for people to fall on when accidents happen. But goodness me, you are hurt!" she said, pointing to his hand, from which the blood was flowing, at the same time taking a handkerchief from her pocket and binding up the wound before Ralph could object. She looked so pretty, her trim little figure dressed in a brown khaki costume, a felt hat, with a raven's wing stuck in the band, pushed far back on her head, and her reddish-brown hair shining in the sunlight, that Ralph quite forgot his injured hand.

"You are sure you are not hurt?" he asked again.

"I know I am not. If I had been they would have heard me in the allies's trenches. I am not a bit brave, and if anything is the trouble I cry like a big baby, so don't say another word about it."

"Very well, I won't; but if you are all right, your machine is not. Just look at it, and mine is as badly broken as yours."

They stood looking at the wrecks, neither of them in a very happy frame of mind.

"Oh, dear," cried the girl, as she examined the broken rim and bent fork. "It's spoiled, and the first time I ever rode it. I don't know what papa will say. You ought to have been more careful. Why didn't you scream, or turn out, or something, when you saw me coming? It's just like you men, you are so careless."

"I did not see you," said Ralph. "I am terribly sorry. You see my motor is in a worse condition than yours."

"Well, it isn't so bad for you as it is for me; mine is new, and yours is an old one."

"It is not mine; it is one I borrowed," said Ralph ruefully.

"Not yours, and all smashed like that! It's too bad! Won't the man you borrowed it of be mad?"

"Yes; I suppose so; but it can't be helped. The thing to be done now is to get home. Where, may I ask, do you live?"

"In Loomis."

"So do I, and that is fourteen miles from here. The nearest house is the one you can see, two miles down the valley, and the railroad station is a good five miles away."

"We can walk to the house," said Helen, "and hire the man to take us home in a wagon; but what shall we do with the motorcycles?"

"We can leave them for the present. They are safe enough as they are. Perhaps we will be able to have them taken care of by the people at the house."

Ralph managed to drag the machines behind a clump of bushes, and then they walked down the hill toward the house, which they could see half-hidden behind the trees. For a few minutes neither of them spoke. She was making a mental survey of her companion.

"Where do you live?" at last asked the girl.

"At No. 30 Bush street."

"Why!" she exclaimed, "you must live with Mrs. Streeter. My father owns that house. Mrs. Streeter doesn't pay her rent, and papa says he has to make her move. He hates to do it, but one of the workmen wants the tenement."

Ralph turned red, and trembled, but he walked on without saying anything.

"Do you think Mrs. Streeter is so very poor?" asked Helen, after a pause. "You live there, and ought to know."

The young man felt like telling her who he was, yet he knew if he did it would be embarrassing, and no good could come of it. They would probably never meet again. It would, however, do no harm to tell her about his mother.

"Yes," he said, "she is poor. I board with her, but I have been sick and out of work, so have got behind. As soon as I am earning something, I shall pay her, and then she will pay your father. But here we are at the house."

Ralph felt relieved at this interruption. He had found out who his companion was, and although she knew where he lived, he had not told her his name. He would see that she did not return to the unwelcome and painful subject. Helen rushed forward and knocked at the door,

which was opened by a good-natured-looking woman of middle-age.

"We have had an accident," said the girl—"this gentleman and I. We have had our motorcycles smashed, some distance down the road, and want to know if we can hire your horse to take them to the railroad station?"

"You might, if the horse were here," was the reply, "but John has gone to town, and won't be back until night. I am sorry. Won't you come up on the piazza and rest?

"Isn't that lovely?" cried Helen enthusiastically. "Why, one can't even see the road, the vines are so thick, and those little round tables—what are they for?" she asked, turning to the woman, who was dusting one of the chairs with her apron.

"Those are the result of one of my schemes. Money isn't very plentiful with us, so I said to John, said I: 'There are dozens of them motorcycle chaps going by here every day. They are always calling and wanting something to eat, and I am going to buy some tables and chairs, keep a lot of victuals on hand, and see what I can do.' John didn't think much of it, but he finally gave in. When he sees how well I shall do, I know he will be glad I tried it. But, mercy on me, how riding does make a man eat!"

"I am so glad we called here!" cried Helen. "I am terribly hungry! We will have lunch now. You may put a table in that corner, and if you will give me a vase I will pick some of those flowers to make it look pretty. We always have flowers at home."

Their hostess bustled about preparing the meal, and Helen quite forgot the accident in the novelty of the scene. With Ralph it was different; he was troubled and sad.

"I don't care for lunch now, you need not get me any," he said.

"Why, of course you do!" cried Helen disappointedly. "You wouldn't have me eat by myself; there would be no fun in that. Yes, Mrs.—Mrs.——"

"Brown, if you please," said the woman.

"Yes, Mrs. Brown, we will both eat."

Ralph was in a quandary. With not a cent of money in his pocket, twelve miles from home, and a hungry woman on his hands, he felt himself in a most unpleasant situation. It was not right to eat a lunch for which he could not pay, yet he could not tell his companion the state of affairs.

The meal was soon ready, and the two seated themselves at the little table which had been placed in the corner. Mrs. Brown was all attention; Helen laughed and chatted, and was such a jolly companion that Ralph was soon telling stories, and paying compliments to Mrs. Brown's cooking. He was quite surprised at his own fund of anecdotes, but the thought of putting off the evil moment of disclosure as long as possible, while it offered no plans for getting out of his difficulty, stimulated his desire to amuse the two women. They had already sat at the table for a long time. Helen several times suggested that they must be going, and Mrs. Brown was listening to his jokes with less and less interest.

"This has been delightful," he said, rising from the table, "and I am sorry we must leave. Before I go I want to look about your place. I am very fond of farm-life." He left the two women, and in an aimless sort of way wandered out into the barn. His great desire was to meet some one to whom he could explain matters and, if possible, get them to loan him enough money to pay for the little dinner, and railroad fare home. Mrs. Brown was away, but perhaps a hired-man might be about the place. He looked through the barn and the dairy, wandered into the field and through the garden. There was no one in sight. The place was deserted save for Mrs. Brown. There was no way out of it; he must ask Miss Hyde to pay the bill, or fix the matter up with their hostess. He resolved upon the former course. Walking around the back of the house, he had nearly reached the piazza, when Mrs. Brown's cheery voice came to him clear and distinct.

A ray of hope came to him. Was Helen going to pay the bill? He felt very mean to allow a woman to do such a thing, but what was he to do? His hopes were soon shattered by Helen's reply.

"Really, Mrs. Brown," she said, "I don't know anything about such things. I never thought about it when I ordered the lunch, and I haven't a cent of money with me. You must ask him. He ran into me, so he will pay. Besides, he knows more about such matters than I do."

He did not wait to hear more of the conversation but, retracing his steps, soon rejoined the two women.

"We must go now," he said; "and before we go I should like a glass of water; this spring-water is so different from that which we have in the city."

Mrs. Brown, smiling and happy, went to get the water, and Ralph followed her.

"Mrs. Brown," he said, as she handed him the glass, "this has been a delightful little lunch. I shall come here often, and tell my friends about it. How much do I owe you?"

"Well, really, I don't know. I was just asking the miss, but she said she knew nothing about such matters. What do you think?"

"That is not for me to say. Any sum which you may name will be satisfactory."

The woman stopped to consider, and Ralph put his hand in his pocket as if to get his money. He quickly withdrew it and began fumbling about in his other pockets, while a look of surprise and disappointment overspread his face.

"I—I declare," he stammered, "I have left my pocket-book at home. I don't know what I shall do. I am awfully sorry." After a moment he began to smile. "I have it, I will ask Miss Hyde for her pocket-book."

"You needn't do that," suggested Mrs. Brown in tones considerably sharpened by disappointment; "she also has left her money at home. It's a pretty excuse. I believe it's a cut-and-dried plan. If all motorcyclers were like you, how do you think honest folks would get a living?"

"But, my dear woman——"

"Don't dear me! It's scandalous! I wish John was at home."

"I wish he was. I think I could convince him. I don't look like a beat, do I?"

The woman looked him squarely in the face, until both of them began laughing.

"No; I don't think you do," she said. "I think you are honest. I have got a boy of my own, about your age, and if he was in the same trouble I should want some one to help him out. I won't say anything now about the bill, and you may pay me when you can."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Ralph, seizing her hand. "You have done a kindness to me which I shall never forget. May every unfortunate rider fall into such good hands."

The two went back to the veranda. Mrs. Brown bade her guests a cordial good-by, and they were soon on their way. At the bend of the road Helen waved a farewell to Mrs. Brown, who still stood on the veranda watching them, then turning to Ralph she said:

"Wasn't that jolly! I declare it isn't half bad to have one's motor broken. But do you know you haven't told

me your name? I don't know what mother would say to my going about with a strange man, who hadn't told me who he is," she said merrily. "My name is Hyde," she said; "and yours?"

"Mine? Oh, mine is Ralph."

"Ralph; I like that name. Are you any relation to Julian Ralph, the author?"

"Not that I know of, although I may be. I never kept much track of my relations."

In his pleasure of escaping from Mrs. Brown, he had forgotten all about his next difficulty, and he and his new acquaintance were having such a pleasant time that it was not until they had gone some distance before he began to think how he should pay for the railway tickets into town. He had not told her that he was without money, and resolved to continue the deceit. He was beginning to enjoy himself now the game was going his way, but every step was taking them nearer the station when he must again invent some means of escape, and perhaps be obliged to part from his pleasant chance acquaintance. His first victory was easy, the second one might not be.

They reached the station half an hour before train-time. There was no one about. He thought of the ticket-agent, but if he spoke to him Helen would hear; then again, he might refuse to help him. If he should it would be too late to ask aid of any one else, and they could not reach Loomis until midnight. What was he to do? A little way down the road along which they had come was a house; perhaps the people who lived there would help him out of his difficulty.

"Will you wait here," he said to his companion; "I want to go back down the road to see some one who lives there, and see if I can get our motorcycles brought to the station in time for the train. I will be back in a few minutes."

As he came near the house a man stood at the pump. There was no time to be lost. Ralph told his story at once and begged the stranger to loan him money enough to buy two tickets to Loomis, and borrow a horse and wagon to fetch the motors to the depot. Setting down his pail, the farmer looked at him suspiciously.

"Well, I call that cheek," he said. "You fellows want to sink the State with your stuck-up ideas about roads. You think we farmers don't know nothing, and now I'll be darned if you don't come around and want to borrow our money. You can't make a fool of me, so that's the end of it." Taking up his water-pail, he started for the house.

Ralph was getting desperate. It was nearly train-time, and he would have just about time enough to go back with the wagon and fetch the motorcycles.

"Say, mister," he cried, "you may go with me and see the motorcycles; that will prove to you that I am no fraud."

"I don't want to see two old broken cycles; they are a nuisance anyway. I wish there weren't any." The stranger continued towards the barn, and Ralph followed him.

"I am no beggar, and if you will lend me enough money to get to town, I will leave this ring with you until I pay it back," he said, as he took from his finger the gold band which he wore.

The farmer took the ring and examined it carefully.

"Well," he said, "I will do it. I reckon the thing is wurth more'n two car-fares."

"It is most train-time," suggested Ralph anxiously.

"Now, don't be in a hurry, young man; this world wa'n't made in a day."

He took from his pocket a little canvas bag, and putting his hand into it, drew out a few coins. One by one he counted them, while Ralph waited impatiently.

"I can't do it," he said, after the last coin had been dropped into the bag. "There ain't but fifty-seven cents here, and it takes sixty-four to buy two tickets. Sally's up to Neighbor Goode's, and this is all the money there is about the place."

He was about to return the bag to his pocket, when Ralph seized it and started to run.

"I will be back and pay you. Keep the ring until I come!" shouted the young man, as he ran up the road.

Surprised at the sudden onslaught, the farmer made no move to follow the retreating youth.

He checked his speed before he reached the station, and sauntered along the platform to where Helen stood.

"Did you think I was not coming back?" he said with a smile. "Please stand there a moment longer while I get the tickets."

He bought one ticket. Helping Helen onto the car, he found a seat for her near the door, explained hastily that he would have to stay and have the motorcycles sent home on a later train. The train was beginning to move. Quickly thrusting the ticket into her hand, without a word of adieu, he rushed for the door and swung himself off the moving car. He stood there on the track for a few moments, watching the train disappearing in the distance. He had made up his mind to walk to Loomis, and was about to start. Glancing backward, he saw a motor-truck from a big department-store at Loomis. Rushing up to the driver he was glad to find that he knew the man who, after an explanation, offered to get the motorcycles on his way back to Loomis, and Ralph jumped on the motor-truck with a relieved mind. After making his deliveries, the machines were picked up, and they started for Loomis.

They deposited Helen's machine at her door and then they started for Ralph's home.

Helen told of her adventure with great glee, praising "Mr. Ralph" to such a degree that her father resolved to know more of the young man who had been his daughter's companion for the day.

Ralph did not get home until evening. He was tired and unhappy. The trouble which threatened his mother, and which he knew not how to ward off, his own poverty and the thought of the broken motorcycle, oppressed him; yet in spite of it all, like a golden thread running through a black cloth, Helen Hyde and her pleasant ways were conspicuous objects in his troubled mind. He did not mention the accident to his mother, for he felt that her distress was enough without adding to it, but he resolved that if there was work to be had in the city he would find it.

Next morning, as Ralph was leaving home, a note was brought to the house addressed to "Mr. Ralph." He tore it open with many misgivings, and as he read the color left his face. It was from Helen's father. There was but one sentence:

"YOUNG MAN: If you are the one who ruined my daughter's motorcycle, please call at my office at once."

There was no way of escape, and much as he dreaded the meeting, he started as the note commanded—at once. He had never seen Mr. Hyde. A thousand unpleasant visions filled his mind.

It was but a short distance to Mr. Hyde's factories, and upon his inquiring for that gentleman, he was at once shown to the private office. Seated at a desk covered with papers was an elderly man who, as Ralph entered, looked up over the top of his glasses, and then resumed his

writing. After a few minutes, which seemed hours to the young man, he wheeled about in his chair.

"Do you want to see me?" he asked.

"No, sir; but you sent for me."

"You are Mr. Ralph, are you?"

"I am Ralph Streeter."

"Streeter? My daughter said your name was Ralph."

"So it is, and that is what I told her. I did not tell her my last name."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Hyde severely.

Ralph colored, and for a few moments remained silent. Mr. Hyde watched him closely.

"I am waiting," he said at last.

"Your daughter asked me where I lived before she knew my name, and when I told her, she said you owned the house and was going to put the tenant out. If I had let her know it was my mother it would have made her feel badly and done no good; so when she asked my name, I said Ralph, and so it is."

Mr. Hyde smiled slightly, but Ralph did not notice it.

"Why did you leave my daughter to come home by herself?"

"I did not have money enough to buy two tickets."

"Why did you not ask Helen for some?"

"That would have done no good, for I heard her tell Mrs. Brown that she had left her purse at home. Besides, I was not going to tell her how things were; she was in trouble enough already."

Mr. Hyde ran his hand through his long, thin hair.

"Young man," he said, "I think I have heard only a part of this adventure; tell me all about it."

Ralph did as he was bid, finding in Mr. Hyde a listener who was not only attentive but sympathetic. He was constantly interrupting him with questions, and before the story of the accident had been told, Mr. Hyde had gained much information regarding both Ralph and his mother.

"Streeter," he said, when Ralph had finished, "I believe you are a good combination—poor, honest, kind-hearted and shrewd. I think that all you need is a chance. I want just such a man. You may come here to work to-morrow morning. What do you say?"

"I will be here," was Ralph's quick reply.

The terms of their agreement were soon completed, and the next morning the young man began his labors.

Mr. Hyde was a shrewd judge of character. Ralph proved to be all that he anticipated, and soon won not only his confidence but his friendship.

A few months later, on a Saturday half-holiday, Ralph and his mother were enjoying the hospitality of the Hydes.

"Just think of it," said Helen, "if it hadn't been for that accident we should never have known each other. I am so glad it happened."

Mr. Hyde smiled.

"We have never been to Merriweather hill nor seen Mrs. Brown," he said. "Here is the carriage; we will go this afternoon."

"We can't all go in our carriage," exclaimed Helen.

"No," was the reply; "but we old folks can. You and Ralph may go on that."

They all looked in the direction to which he pointed. Coming from the stable was Donald, the coachman, pushing a motorcycle with a side-car attached.

"Oh, you dear, old dad," cried Helen, running to her father, and hugging and kissing him. Ralph, while he had no desire to be her father, wished that he were in his place.

That half-holiday, with its ride, its lunch, and its love-making, was a happy one, and as they rode home in the moonlight each one felt that, good or bad, there was no fault to be found now with the Merriweather hill road.

Our next issue will contain a number of the most intensely interesting short stories ever published. They are on odd subjects, and will well repay you to read them. Watch for these interesting items.

MAKING MONEY FROM THE MARSHLAND

TRUCK gardening on drained marshlands is a new Wisconsin industry, tried out in Juneau and Monroe Counties the past season by a colony of Chinese from Chicago.

Hip Lung, Mayor of Chinatown, and Toy Jung, millionaire, are the financial backers. They leased 875 acres for five years, and after a season's tryout purchased the entire tract from the Wisconsin Drained Land Company. Despite dismal native prophecies, the Chinese, on their arrival, set briskly to work preparing the land. A snowy, cold March, a cold and wet April, May and June, proved their mettle and incidentally tested their gardening methods. If demeanor speaks, the bearing of these quiet, painstaking men plainly said to the pessimistic native farmers, "Why worry? We have done our bit, and we leave the rest to Mother Nature."

The experiment of fertilizing with ground limestone was successfully tried. Experts say the land has been advanced further in one season by the Chinese gardeners than in three by American methods. The Chinese plow, shipped by express from San Francisco, was the wonder of wonders. When this unique implement is used three horses travel abreast at the right of the furrow and the plow follows at the left almost on a line with the horses. The land was plowed twice and harrowed several times. The colony purchased fourteen teams of fine horses.

Four hundred acres of potatoes bloomed. Close to the Irish potato grew the aristocratic Chinese variety used for chop suey. The Chinese method of deep planting, twelve inches or more, was a matter of much scorn to the native farmer. The potato fields weathered a cold, wet season—the supreme test. Hundreds of bushels were shipped to Chicago, where they brought a big price. A potato warehouse is one of the immediate projects. Another is a greenhouse where Chinese vegetables, lettuce, cabbage, potatoes and celery may be grown in winter. The Chinese varieties are used in Chinese restaurants. Hip Lung is the proprietor of one.

The marshlands have been of little commercial value, and many acres are sold for taxes. When drained, the lands are more marketable, but just the right crop has never been found. Cranberries have been the best paying crop. It would be interesting if the Chinese colony should have solved the great problem and many truck gardens would in time flourish apace on the drained lands.

A visitor to the quarters built by the colony is made welcome by Toy Fung, foreman. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. No women are permitted to live at the colony. A house in the nearby village of Mather was rented, redecorated and furnished. Here relatives and guests of the men are housed and entertained. Many visitors from Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis find their way to this retreat. Their coming is hailed with joy. Fifty children from Chicago's Chinatown were guests for one week of Hip Lung and Toy Fung.

THE ACCUSING HAND

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

I HAD been very busy all the spring and early summer, and thought myself entitled to the leave of absence I asked for in August. The chief laughed when I made my request for a vacation.

"You might as well stay here at the office," he said.

"Why?"

"Ten to one you don't spend the time in building up your health and strength. You'll get mixed up into some crime, I'll bet my life."

"Nonsense," I replied. "Can I go?"

"Yes. I am glad, Clark, to have it in my power to grant you leave of absence, and show you how much I appreciate you."

I bowed my acknowledgment and, having arranged the dates and terms of my vacation, thanked him and went home to prepare for my trip.

At first, I decided not to stop short of two hundred miles from New York. Then, however, arose another consideration—I was going for a quiet, pleasurable time, and must be with or near friends. The result was that I packed up and went to visit an old friend of mine, just back of the village of Tarrytown, on the Hudson River, and only twenty-five miles from New York.

I received a most cordial welcome; was free from care, and had a sense of relief, with the knowledge that I could lie around as lazily as I pleased. Whole days were passed in a dreamy state, lying flat on my back beneath a giant oak, the smoke from my cigar curling lazily upward, while I watched the fleecy clouds which floated in the blue vault above. However, this was destined to have an ending.

"Clark," exclaimed my host one day, "something awful has happened!"

"Yes," I said, turning to face him. But his manner, his pale face, aroused me. "What is it?"

"Old 'Squire Redmond has been murdered in his bed!"

I was on my feet in an instant.

"When did you hear of it?"

"Just as I was leaving the house after breakfast."

"When did it happen?"

"They say it must have been done early last evening."

I glanced at my watch. It was then nine o'clock. The sun was well up in the heavens and it was very warm.

"How far away is the Redmond home?"

"Half a mile. Will you go over, Clark?"

"Yes; come on."

We reached the place in a very few minutes. I was not known to be a detective, and my questions were freely replied to. I soon learned all that was known.

Old 'Squire Redmond had long been ailing, and the previous morning had been informed by the doctor that he could not live more than a day or two longer. He faced death bravely.

"In that case it is about time I made my will," he said.

Redmond's lawyer lived in New York, and it was late in the afternoon before he reached the house.

He then drew up a will, by the terms of which Sadie Redmond, a niece who lived with him, became the sole heiress to Redmond's wealth.

"How about Arthur, your nephew?" asked the lawyer. "Being the only other relation you have in the world, do you not wish to do something for him?"

"No; I have learned from truthful sources he has become very fast, that he has chosen very bad men for companions, and I do not feel like leaving the wealth accumulated by honest industry to one who will squander it on people more vicious than himself."

The lawyer bowed.

"How about witnesses?" he asked. "Whom will you call in to witness your signature?"

"The doctor will be here about dark, and he and my housekeeper shall be the witnesses. Go now and get some refreshments, and send my niece to me."

The lawyer left the room, sending Sadie in to her uncle. Several hours passed. None visited the sick-room, as all was quiet there. It became dark. The doctor arrived between nine and ten. He had been delayed, he said. A man had broken his leg, and he had been compelled to set it before coming.

"We may as well finish the job of his will," said the lawyer; and he, the doctor, and the housekeeper entered the 'squire's room. All was quiet as the grave, and the room was dark.

"Sadie!"

But no reply came to the housekeeper's low call.

"She must have fallen asleep," said the woman, as she lighted a lamp.

Both the doctor and lawyer uttered a cry of surprise as the darkness was dispelled. The doctor sprang to the bedside.

"He is dead!" he said, the instant he touched the cold hand. "He has been dead an hour or more!"

"Where is his niece?" asked the lawyer.

Sadie was nowhere to be found.

They thought possibly that her uncle had died suddenly and she had fled in terror to her room, there to grieve in silence. But when they looked into her room she was not there, nor could she be found anywhere in the house.

Meanwhile the doctor had examined the corpse more closely, and he startled the lawyer by declaring that Redmond had been choked to death.

High and low they hunted for Sallie, but she could not be found. There on the table lay the unsigned will. An hour passed, and then the lawyer sent away a telegraphic dispatch to Arthur Brooks, New York.

Back came the reply in due season:

"I will be up on the midnight train. BROOKS."

This was the state of affairs when I arrived at the Redmond place the next morning about half-past nine. Arthur Brooks, the intended-to-be disinherited nephew, was in full charge of the place. Sadie was still missing, much to the grief of the housekeeper, who loved her dearly. The doctor had gone home, but the lawyer still remained.

There could be no question that Redmond had been choked. The livid finger-marks on his throat, though fading, were still visible.

Who could have done the horrid deed? The niece, Sadie?

I took the lawyer aside and questioned him.

"Sadie! Pooh! Why, man, she's scarce more than a child," said the lawyer. "But, sir, who are you?"

When I told him he was surprised.

"You must keep my identity a secret," I said.

"I shall do so. Now, sir tell me frankly, what do you think of this?"

"You knew of none who was so much Redmond's enemy as to wish to choke out his last few hours of breath?"

"No," he reluctantly admitted.

"Then, depend on it, it is another of those sad cases of a family murder, with money at the bottom as a cause."

"But Sadie could not have done it."

"She was strong enough to get the best of the weakened and dying man?"

"Yes," as reluctantly as before.

"Now, as regards this nephew—what of him?"

"He could not have done it," was the prompt and convinced reply. "Less than an hour after the discovery of Redmond's death I telegraphed him at New York and received a reply in due season. Had he done it he could have never got back to the city in time to answer my dispatch."

He showed me the answering dispatch of Arthur Brooks.

I was staggered, I must admit, for my suspicions ran to him rather than to Sadie. I learned that the 'squire had no other known relations, and that there was no one else who could possibly be interested in his death.

"I am positive that it will transpire that this money was at the bottom of it," I said in conclusion. "As the old gentleman's lawyer, can you tell me anything of the intended disposition of his property?"

This direct question put me in possession of the reason for the lawyer's visit, and I learned that it was intended that Arthur Brooks should be disinherited.

"There is your motive!" I exclaimed. "By the old man's death before the signing of the will, this man Brooks comes in for a share of the property."

"But the telegram!" persisted the lawyer. "How can you explain that?"

I could not explain it, and kept my mouth shut.

"Let us make another search for the niece; she can't be far away," I suggested.

Some people from the neighboring farms were before the house, and at my request they separated and began a search for the young girl.

"It is a very sad affair, Mr. Brooks," I said.

"Yes," he answered, in a low tone, one which to me seemed assumed. "It is a very sad affair."

"Will you accompany me in the quest of your cousin?"

To any one not looking for it, his answer would have seemed prompt, but I discovered loathfulness and hesitation in it.

We searched the house again, and then went out on the grounds and towards a little stream at the bottom of the well-kept lawn.

A shout suddenly came to our ears, and both of us started, he in a guilty manner, I thought. I saw him glance at me, and then he started forward by my side, as if overcoming a desire to hang back. We parted the shrubbery and stepped into a shady path running parallel with the sluggish stream, which emptied its waters into a tiny pond not far distant. Clutching a tree for support was a farmer, one hand extended and pointing toward the water. A dozen or more had already collected about him, and were gazing into the stream, pale-faced and horrified.

At first I could see nothing, but presently my gaze became riveted on a human hand protruding from the water. A human hand, so soft and white that I knew it to be a female's, and tightly clasped about the stem of a water-lily.

Murder again, was the thought which flashed across my brain. She could never have been forced down and held under, and in her death-agony had clutched hold of the lily.

The housekeeper sank down on the root of a tree, and with a hollow groan clasped her hands.

"My poor darling! Oh! will not some one take her out?"

An old farmer handed his hat to the lawyer. He must be uncovered when he touched the dead. And then he kneeled down on the edge of the stream and bared his arms.

I stepped back to the rear, and watched Brooks closely as he clutched his cane and bent forward with a look of mingled eagerness and dread.

The farmer plunged his hand deep into the water and took hold of the girl's arm. I am not a believer in the supernatural and am fully persuaded that what followed was owing to natural causes, such as his pressing a particular set of muscles, but certain it is that as he began to raise the body the hand relaxed its grip of the lily, and the forefinger was accusingly directed straight at Arthur Brooks.

Never shall I forget his sudden recoil, the low, horrified cry that escaped from his lips. The others did not notice it, being interested in the farmer's solemn work, but I did. Then the water parted, and there was no longer any doubt; it was the corpse of Sadie.

Carefully did I look, but could discover no marks of violence. Nevertheless, I was positive that her death had not been accidental.

Arthur Brooks was the murderer of both! So I was satisfied. But how could I prove it? How explain away the fact of the telegram sent from New York so promptly in reply to that of the lawyer?

I studied the circumstances as a professor of mathematics might an algebraic question. Granting that the murder had taken place about the hour when darkness settled—eight o'clock—he could have reached the city in time to send the reply, which was dated at ten minutes past eleven.

I obtained a railroad time-table.

Had the murder been committed as late as nine o'clock, he could have reached the depot before half-past, at which hour a train left. It reached the Grand Central depot at ten minutes before eleven, allowing him ample time to reach his boarding-place, and finding the lawyer's telegram, send a reply. With this clue I started for New York. At the depot I found a chauffeur who had driven a man from that train to the very house where Arthur lived. They reached there just as a messenger-boy arrived with a telegram. The man had said it was for him, had taken and read it and, jumping into the taxi again, was driven to a telegraph office.

The next train carried me back to Tarrytown. I went direct to the Redmond place. My stern face must have betrayed my purpose to Brooks, for at sight of me, I saw his hand glide toward his hip-pocket.

"Arthur Brooks, you are my prisoner!" I said, as I sprang at him.

"Your prisoner? Are you crazy? What do you mean?"

"That you are a murderer!" I exclaimed. "Surrender peaceably!"

The hand I had seen stealing to his hip-pocket now came flashing before him, clutching a revolver, which he aimed at my head.

"Damn you!" he hissed. "I know you now! You are a

detective, but you shall never take me—never! I have been playing a desperate game, and but for you would have succeeded. Take the reward for your meddling!"

I tried to spring aside, and had so far succeeded that his bullet, though it plowed the scalp to my skull, did not enter my brain. Then I sprang fiercely upon him, and tried to wrench his revolver from his hand. I might have drawn my own and shot him dead, but I wanted to save for electrocution the man who had murdered sweet, pretty Sadie.

The struggle was short, though fierce and bitter. It would, however, have ended fatally for me had not the lawyer, attracted by the pistol-shot, rushed in at a juncture when the murderer had got me down, his knee pressing against my throat, while cocking his revolver.

With an oath, he was in the act of placing it to my temple, when the lawyer dashed it from his hand.

Surprised, Brooks unconsciously gave me an opportunity to arise, which I at once availed myself of, and with the lawyer's assistance we soon had the prisoner securely bound.

"I told you so!" laughed the chief, when I returned to the office with my head all bandaged.

Through the papers he had learned all about the affair and the part I had played in it.

"I told you so! How do you feel? You look pale!"

"It was a tough job," I answered. "But I come——"

"To get your leave of absence extended," he interrupted. "I can see it in your face. Well, go ahead, but report for duty as soon as possible."

I attended the trial of Brooks.

He denied his guilt, but needless to say was convicted and sentenced to death. A few days before the day of execution he confessed his guilt.

He had heard of his uncle's sickness, and determined to visit him; arrived unseen, and had crossed the lawn to the low French windows of his uncle's room. Squire Redmond had fallen asleep, and Sadie had gone out into the grounds. A light was burning, and seeing the unsigned will, he read it. If his uncle died before it was signed he would be wealthy; otherwise he would be a beggar. Prompted by a hellish feeling, he attacked his uncle, turned out the light, and left the room. Desiring to leave the place unseen, he had gone to the usually deserted path beside the stream. A voice asking: "Who is it?" startled him into making an exclamation, and Sadie, recognizing his voice, called him by name. That was enough. Desperate, reckless, he committed a second crime to conceal the first.

Some soul-gripping sketches by several new authors will be published in the next issue. Don't miss reading them. They are splendid.

AN UNEXPLORED REGION

GEORGE GARDINER, of Ottawa, is in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, outfitting for a trek over the trail of romance to the Upper Hayes River district to prospect a gold claim located by a man he believes to have been his uncle on the bank of the Peace River in 1898, during the rush to the Yukon, when this city was made the starting point of the overland trail to the Klondike.

The story told here by Gardiner is that during the Klondike rush three prospectors went into the Hayes River country, which, except for a small part along the river near Vermillion, is unexplored. One of the party was found on the river bank a year afterward. The man was emaciated and lived only a few hours, but in his last few minutes of life told of a fight with Indians, who killed his two companions. He had in his possession samples of the richest gold. It could have been procured in no other place, so it may be that that unexplored territory is rich in the yellow metal.

Though the hinterland has been explored to points within the Arctic Circle, the Upper Hayes country still remains a vast unknown stretch. Remarking upon the fact, an old-timer in the North country said he had never known of a white man getting far into that part of the country.

From Edmonton to Peace River Crossing, by way of Athabasca, is 400 miles, and outside of about a fifty-mile stretch beyond. Peace River Crossing and the Upper Hayes still lies a great unexplored land of rolling and, so far as is known, open country. It is inhabited by the Dog Ribs tribe of Indians. The territory runs clear through to the mountains on the British Columbia side, and it is supposed that "bad Indians" have settled in there.

PEELING PEARLS

A PEARL that is clouded or spotted or off color may sometimes be peeled; in other words, a layer may be taken off as is the layer of an onion. If the layer beneath, as sometimes happens, is of beautiful lustre the pearl is many times more valuable than before it was peeled, in spite of the fact that it is smaller.

Pearls do not always retain the color that they have taken from the shell. Some pearls become cloudy. A pearl of extraordinary lustre was once found in a Wabash River mussel, and its color was entrancing. Buyers bid for it, and two of them, combining their resources, paid $3,000 for the gem.

They hurried to Maiden lane in New York with their find and demanded $30,000 for it. There were no takers, although the pearl was a wonderful one to look at.

A day or two passed, and suddenly one of the owners discovered a shade on the surface of the pearl that startled him.

The owner placed it in a vial of water, where it was left for a month. When they again examined it they were sadder and wiser men. The pearl was covered with little snowflake spots.

Panic-stricken, they searched for a buyer. They received bids of about $500, and finally a pearl speculator paid them $1,500 for it. They were out $1,500, their time and traveling expenses.

The speculator knew that the pearl was worth little with its freckles, but he gambled that when a layer or two of the outer skin had been removed he would have a pearl of permanent lustre. Whether he won or lost he did not divulge.

A pearl possesses the hardness of limestone, and a sharp knife or three-cornered file is used to peel it. It takes good eyesight, a hard thumb to hold the gem and the nerve and skill that will permit one to give just the right pressure and no more.

THE LACY JEWELS

By DETECTIVE DICKSON

"WHAT is that?"

It was a woman's voice, the hour was midnight, and the place a bedroom.

"What do you mean, Julia?" asked the lady's husband.

"Oh, a noise; I don't know what it is."

"Can you not tell what it sounds like?"

"Like—like some one in my dressing-room."

"Nonsense; you were dreaming."

"No, I was not," said Mrs. Lacy emphatically. "I have been lying awake here for more than an hour listening to it."

"You are nervous."

"I am not. I tell you I heard some one."

"It was only your imagination. You spend all your time worrying about your jewels."

"Listen then. Did you not hear that?"

"What was it?"

"A clink of metal."

"No."

"But I did."

"Where?"

"In my *boudoir*."

"I tell you, my dear, it was all imagination. Hush up now, and think no more of it. Do try and go to sleep."

Donald Lacy turned over in the bed, and composed himself to sleep. Mrs. Lacy lay for some time listening, and then fell into a feverish, fitful slumber. Morning came at last, and the family was aroused by the breakfast-bell.

Mr. Lacy was a well-to-do uptown merchant. His business required his presence as early as eight o'clock.

He arose hastily, dressing himself and arranging his toilet for breakfast. He had forgotten all about the slight noises his wife had heard during the night, and already his mind had preceded him on his business uptown.

Not so, however, with Mrs. Lacy. She put on her wrapper, and hurried into her *boudoir*. A shriek brought Mr. Lacy to her side. The room was in a confused condition. Everything was topsy-turvy, and in the center of the room was the jewelry-case broken open and empty.

Mrs. Lacy fainted outright. Mr. Lacy carried her to the bed-chamber and rang for assistance. Then locking the dressing-chamber he left his wife in care of the housekeeper, and ran with all speed to the police-station.

"Good-morning, Mr. Lacy," said the chief of police, who had just entered the office. "What is the matter? You look excited!"

"I want your most experienced detective at once," gasped the almost-breathless man.

"What have you lost?"

"My wife's jewels."

"What do they amount to?"

"Some fifty thousand dollars."

"When were you robbed?"

"Last night.

"You came as soon as the loss of the jewels was discovered?"

"Yes. Will you take steps to find the thief?"

"Certainly."

"Send your best man to my house."

"Mr. Crump, our shrewdest detector, will be here in a few minutes, and we will send him to your house as soon as he comes in."

Mr. Lacy returned to his home and found his wife almost distracted. He did all he could to console her, assuring the lady that everything that could be done to recover her property would be attended to.

The breakfast was not enjoyed by the family. Scarcely was the morning meal over when the door-bell rang. Mr. Lacy arose himself to answer the summons. He found at the door a rather pale man, with light hair, smooth-shaved, and carrying a cane in his hand.

"I was sent here," he said, "by the chief of police."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, you are the——"

"Yes, sir; and I had better see you in your room."

They went to a private room, and there the man informed him that he was a detective sent by the chief to work up the case, and that his name was Crump.

Mr. Lacy then told him all he knew about the burglary. He explained how his wife had been disturbed during the night by a noise, then missed the jewels in the morning. They were family heirlooms, and were prized quite highly, outside of their intrinsic value.

"Do you suspect any one?" asked the detective, after examining the room from which they had been taken.

"No."

Crump examined the premises and quizzed the servants. Then, he got a suspicion in his mind, and said:

"I will undertake this case, and in less than a month I will have the real thief in jail."

"Do so, and you shall have a reward of five thousand dollars," said Mr. Lacy earnestly.

"You must help me."

"Whatever is necessary I will do cheerfully."

"Well, then, there will be a man here in two or three hours to seek employment. He will be attired in dark clothes, and will wear black bushy hair and a beard. Employ him. Let him have the utmost freedom about the house, and do not discharge him, even if he grows a little wild. This employing must be bona-fide, and payment made as regularly as to any of your servants."

"I understand," Mr. Lacy replied; and the detective left the room.

At ten o'clock the door-bell rang, and Lacy, who answered it, found a stranger there. His whiskers and hair were black, and he had a rather polished look about him.

"I am seeking employment, sir, and was told you wanted a man as butler."

Mr. Lacy employed the strange young man. The servants were astounded to know that the master had taken on another man. Among the most indignant were old Rupert and Powell, two old family servants.

"I don't see what he's a-thinkin' about," said Rupert. "Jest lost all the jewels o' the missus, an' now goin' to hire a strange man what he never seed afore."

"He's gone crazy," Powell answered. "The whole house is in an uproar, and the dear knows we're havin' trouble enough."

The two old men sat down in their accustomed chairs, and began to nod and wink at each other. In spite of the opposition to the new man, Bruce, he soon grew to be a great favorite with all in the house. Perhaps this was because he never failed to have a bottle of brandy about with which he treated Rupert and Powell.

"He's a brick, Powell," said Rupert, his fat cheeks glowing with fervent heat.

"You bet," said the thin-visaged Powell, who always wore a humiliated look.

There were many madcap freaks played by the new man, all which went unnoticed by his master. Complaints went up charging him with drunkenness and various little immoralities, but he retained his place. This naturally bred jealousy and discontent on the part of the fellow-servants.

"Why should the boss grant him such privileges and not give some o' the rest o' us some?" was the general question. But with Rupert and Powell the new man constantly grew in friendship.

It was evening, and Powell was in the kitchen, tipsy from some brandy he had drunk. His usually silent tongue was loosed, and he was talking quite freely.

"Why do not you and Rupert lay up something for yourselves?" asked the new man.

"We 'ave—hic," said the drunken man.

"How much?"

"Oh, a little—hic! We've got enough for a rainy day."

"The boss is wealthy and got plenty."

"Umph, umph—hic!"

"He don't give two old trusties like you as much as he ought."

"No-no, not 'alf—hic!"

"But you'd have to be very careful so as not to be caught. And you ought not to tell any one."

"N-no, you bet not—hic!"

The jolly young fellow plied the old man with brandy until he became quite mellow, and then played upon his confidence until he confessed that which he would not have done under any other circumstances. Powell and Rupert were the thieves. They had stolen the jewels and had them concealed at a house which Rupert owned. Rupert was there now.

The detective let old Powell sleep off the effects of his brandy, and the next morning when the old scoundrel awoke and found the young man at his side, he was not a little alarmed.

"Get up," said the detective, "we must go to Rupert's house and get those jewels."

"What do you mean?" asked the old man, beginning to tremble. "We've got no jewels."

"Do not deny it, Powell; we may let you turn State's evidence if you will help us to return the jewels and convict Rupert. Here is what you said, a schedule of the stolen goods, and a complete description of the place where they are concealed, all taken down in shorthand."

After many humble prayers for mercy, the old sinner agreed to go with him to the house where Rupert had been staying. They found the portly, bald-headed Rupert sitting in an arm-chair in front of the grate.

"What do ye want?" he demanded nervously, springing from his chair.

"The Lacy jewels," the detective answered coolly.

The old rogue began to tremble as Crump drew forth a paper containing the description and location. He read it aloud, and pointing to Powell, who humbly, holding his hat in his hands, stood behind the detective, he added:

"This man says they are here."

"It's all a pack of lies," cried Rupert, trembling violently. The detective seized him. Snap, snap, went the handcuffs, and Rupert was a prisoner. Turning to Powell, Crump said:

"Now show me where they are—quick; or I'll put another pair on you."

The trembling man led the way to the cellar, and there in a niche in the wall the jewels were found.

The astonishment of Mr. Lacy can better be imagined than described when his treasure was returned, and his oldest, most trusty servants brought with them as thieves.

Powell was allowed to turn State's evidence, and was released; while Rupert, on account of his years, only got a short term at Sing Sing.

EVER-BURNING MOUNTAINS

THROUGH a long line of cliffs from Colorado to central Utah, and then southwest toward Arizona, extensive beds of coal are found, and recent geological investigations into this coal formation of the Far West has developed what may be termed burning mountains, or coal beds, a fire with surface indications of constant combustion for ages past. Like other coal-producing States of the Rock Mountain region, the coal fields of Utah are somewhat widely separated, and even the known fields have been comparatively little explored; therefore very little is known of their productive area. The edges of these beds come to the surface in these cliffs nearly 1,000 feet above the bordering desert, and in ages past this coal has burned into the mountain cliffs until smothered by the accumulations of ashes and covering of superincumbent rocks. In places the heat of this burning coal has been so intense as to melt the rocks. From surface appearances the fires have gone out in these cliffs, but at one point in the canyon of Prince River, where the coal is being mined, the rocks are found to be uncomfortably hot, and the miners were compelled to retire for fear the fires would again break out. Other coal fields lie in the desert west of Green River. At two places near tributaries of Fremont River the coals are burning, and have been without cessation since they were discovered by the earliest explorer. At certain intervals, as the burning of the thick beds progresses, producing cavernous spaces in the earth, the rocks cave in, forming vents for the freer circulation of air. Then the coal burns more fiercely, and the heat becomes so intense as to even melt the rocks. The origin of these fires has been the subject of much speculation. Three explanations are commonly heard among the people—the Mormons who inhabit this peculiar country where the mountains burn. One explanation is that lightning has by chance struck the edges of these coal-beds at various times since these mountains were lifted up. Another is that forest fires raging in the mountains came in contact with exposed coal. The more thoughtful point out that the forests in this desert region are too sparse for forest fires to occur. Still another and more common explanation is that the Indians built their campfires under the protecting ledges of the mountains against the coal, and it was thus ignited. They point to the fact that there are ruins of the habitations of cliff-dwellers here, and that in their day the coals began to burn. The coal-miner in this region sees still another possible cause for these fires. In the dry mines they observe that when a quantity of water is thrown upon a heap of dry coal, it spontaneously begins to burn, and if not protected will burn the mine.

A PURSUIT TO THE DEATH

By POLICE SERGEANT DALY

ONE afternoon, among the highest peaks and deepest breaks of the Catskills, a man and a boy could have been seen walking along one of the many dangerous paths on a ledge of rocks that was reared high into the air.

The man was tall, strongly built, and with a stout, dark beard on his face. His eye was steel-gray, and there was a look of determination about his face. His companion was a lad of about fourteen, and from the nimble way in which he moved along that towering shelf of rock, it was evident that he was accustomed to the mountains.

"I feared you was lost, Mr. Baker," said the boy, his bright face glowing with health. "Our boarders frequently get lost among these woods an' mountains. Where in the world did ye intend to go?"

"I was after a fox," said the man. "He was a very cunning, very sly fox, and I followed him a long way, but he managed to escape me."

"A fox, Mr. Baker?" cried the boy in astonishment. "Why, how did you expect to catch a fox in these mountains without a gun or dog?"

Mr. Baker smiled as he contemplated the curious look on the face of his youthful companion. After a moment's silence, during which the two hurried along the mountain path, he said:

"You do not understand all, Harry. Foxes can be sometimes caught without guns or dogs."

"How?" asked Harry.

"Be a good boy, and some time I may tell you," said Mr. Baker.

"I'll be very glad to know, 'cause if there is any easy way to catch these foxes I would be very glad to find it out," said Harry. "But here we are at home again. Mother will be very glad to see us, 'cause she was very much afraid you'd get lost and have to stay all night in the woods."

They came out upon a beautiful little valley of upland, on which was a very neat cottage boarding-house, which, during the summer, and even winter months of the year, had become a favorite resort for persons tired of the city.

Mrs. Bridges, the mother of Harry, a portly widow lady of about forty years, met them at the porch with a pleasant smile of welcome.

"I am real glad to see you, Mr. Baker," said Mrs. Bridges. "I was really afraid that you would get lost in the mountains and forests and have to stay out all night. You must not go away any more unless you have Harry for your guide. He knows every path in the mountains, and can take you anywhere."

"You need entertain no fears on my account," said Mr. Baker. "I assure you I would have found my way back."

Then without any further explanation he entered the house and went up to his room. At supper, which in Mrs. Bridge's country house was always early, he appeared among the other guests. There appeared to be a singular anxiety about him.

As soon as the evening meal was over, Mr. Baker arose and stolled up to the grand plateau, which reared its head a hundred feet at least above the cabin. Strolling among the trees which make a small forest on the plateau, he muttered:

"I knew I would find Gus Klingman somewhere in the midst of the Catskills, hiding from his crimes."

Mr. Baker was a detective from New York City. The person whose arrest he desired was a notorious criminal from the city. Baker had had a brother named George, who was also in the Secret Service Department, and who, in a personal encounter with Klingman, was killed.

With a double incentive to act in the matter, John S. Baker set to work to trace down the murderer. He had followed him to the Catskills, and on the evening in question had got sight of him, with two or three evil-looking fellows, prowling about in the woods.

For two or three weeks he had been a guest at the house of Mrs. Bridges, but this was the first glimpse he had of the murderer. It was with considerable feeling that the detective walked about on the plateau.

He did not walk very far, but pacing back and forth in front of a clump of bushes, the movements of three men concealed there did not attract his attention. The dark forms started from the bushes, and crept behind the detective. They were soon near enough to lay their hands upon him. His ear heard a slight rustle just as three men sprang upon him. Taken by surprise as he was, and although he had received two stunning blows upon the head, the detective was no easy prey.

Wheeling around, he struck one in the face with his fist, and drew a pistol from his pocket with which he fired.

"I am shot!" cried one of the men, clasping his hands to his throat.

Two shots were fired by the remaining men. One bullet wounded the detective in the wrist, knocking his revolver from his hand. The other grazed his head, stunning and confusing him. Before he could sufficiently recover to make a successful resistance, they sprang upon him, and by their superior weight bore him to the earth. He was firmly held, and dragged to the edge of the rocks.

"John Baker," said a harsh, rough voice in his ear, "don't you know me?"

"Yes; I recognize you as the murderer of my brother, Klingman. Justice will shortly overtake you."

"I did kill yer brother," admitted the crook coolly. "I shot him down because he had followed too close in my tracks. You have been doing the same thing."

Shouting could now be heard from the direction of Mrs. Bridge's boarding-house.

"Shove him over," cried Klingman; "a whole army is coming up the mountain-side from the north."

The fall was fully one hundred feet. Dragging the detective to the verge, they hurled him over the edge of the rocks. They heard the crashing as his body plunged down among the branches, shrubs and vines, into the chasm.

"They are comin'; now let's git, Tom, an' go as fast as we kin."

Klingman and his pal seized their dying companion and hurried away.

"Come on—come on!" cried Harry Bridges, leaping upon the plateau, closely followed by Brownfield, the constable, and a dozen other men. "I heard 'em here. Right here is where the shootin' was done."

The lad carried a lantern, with which he thoroughly inspected the ground. There were signs of a struggle. A pistol lay on the grass.

"Look here, Mr. Brownfield," he cried to the constable, who had now reached his side. "Some one has been hurt."

"I see, I see," cried the constable; "they have been dragging some one here." There were signs of a struggle to the very verge of the precipice.

"It's Mr. Baker," said Harry; "he has been murdered. Wait, I will bring a rope, and go into the Witches' Chasm after him."

The boy, nimble as a mountain-goat, dashed down the path, and in ten minutes was back with all the rope he was able to carry. It was two hundred feet in length.

"Who will go down?" asked Mr. Brownfield.

"I will," said Harry, seizing one end of the rope, fastening it to his body, and stepping to the edge of the cliff. Two or three men seized the other end of the rope and Harry swung over the dark abyss. The lantern was fastened to the boy. Those on the plateau shuddered as they contemplated the boy's critical position. The rope was old and frayed and not very strong, while the sides of the precipice were so uneven that it was only with extreme difficulty and danger that he reached a ledge on which the body of the detective lay.

Here he found himself comparatively safe, for though shelving, the table of rock was sufficiently large to afford standing-room. Pulling the rope toward him, Harry held the light to the face of the inert and senseless man.

"He is quite dead," thought Harry, as he cast a look upward.

The boy could see Brownfield by the glare of a torch as he peered over the brink.

"How goes it, lad?" shouted the constable.

"All right," answered Harry, his voice summoning the bellow of a hundred echoes in the hollow vault, "but he's dead. I can make a slip-knot in the rope and tie it under his arms. Then you can haul him up."

The men above pulled with a will, and in a few moments the officer's body was swung off and dragged to the top of the plateau. Harry then came up.

Every one who first saw Baker thought him dead, but in a few moments he began to revive. The trees, shrubs and vines had so broken his fall that not a single bone was fractured, but he was bruised and scratched fearfully, and had a flesh-wound in his right arm. In an hour he declared himself able to resume his pursuit of Gus Klingman. Then he revealed his true character to the constable, and asked his assistance in making the arrest.

When Harry Bridges volunteered to go, the three set off through the woods for a lonely deserted hut called the Witches' Cabin, where the fugitives would doubtless pause with their wounded comrade. It was reached at midnight, and candles were seen burning within. Creeping up to the door, the detective heard the voices of two men engaged in conversation. One was Klingman and the other his companion.

"Bill will die soon," Gus was saying.

"He can't live until morning," replied his companion.

A hollow groan now convinced the detective that they alluded to their wounded companion.

"Well, the man who plugged him will never turn up again," said Klingman.

"Yes, he will," roared Baker's stentorian voice, and with a crash he kicked the door open. He and the constable sprang in, each well armed.

In accordance with this resolution, I sought the manager cleared away the two crooks lay upon the floor of the hut beside their dying comrade.

Klingman and his two associates were taken to New York, and were identified as marked men.

The detective received a reward, and divided it with Mr. Brownfield and Harry Bridges, for their aid.

WHAT A BILLION MEANS

WE hear of billions these days, but it is probable that very few persons have any notion of what an enormous amount of money a billion represents.

We do know, however, how rapidly an expert counter of coins manipulates them. You can scarcely follow the motion of his fingers as he shifts the coins from one pile to another and counts them. The experts in the Treasury Department will count 4,000 silver dollars an hour and keep this up all day long, but that is their limit.

Working eight hours a day then, an expert counter of coin will count 32,000 silver dollars in a day, but how long will it take him at that rate to count a million dollars? Thirty-one days!

But that is only the beginning of the measurements of great figures, for if this same man were to continue to count silver dollars at the same rate of speed for ten years he would find that he had counted only 100,000,000 of them and that to count 1,000,000,000 of them would require 102 years of work at the rate of eight hours a day during every working day of every one of the 102 years.

MARVELOUS MEMORIES OF WELL-KNOWN MEN

ONE of the most remarkable "men of memory" is George Harbottle, a quarry miner living near Newcastle. This "son of the soil" possesses a memory which retains an indelible impression of every word he hears or reads. After once reading a dozen pages of any book he can repeat them without omitting a single word. One morning this remarkable man purchased a volume of the *Faerie Queene*, and before the evening he could recite Spenser's masterpiece from beginning to end.

Viscount Milner, a member of the War Cabinet, is the possessor of a wonderful memory. He once performed an astonishing feat whilst private secretary to Lord Goschen. He was asked to supply a copy of his chief's address to the electors of East Edingurgh, and failing to find the original, he wrote out the address from memory with such marvelous accuracy that on comparing it with the original it was found to contain only one trifling mistake.

Gladstone had a wonderful memory, and could "reel off" passages from Homer, Ovid and the *Iliad* at a moment's notice.

The greatest master of memory, however, was Lord Macaulay. From a very early age the retentiveness of his memory was extraordinary. When only three or four years of age his mind mechanically retained the form of what he read or heard. Once, as a child, when making an afternoon call with his father, he picked up Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* for the first time, and quietly read it while his elders were engaged in conversation. When they returned home, Macaulay amazed his parents by reciting the whole of the poem without a mistake.

TAKING A LONG CHANCE

By A RETIRED DETECTIVE

THE second week of July found me in the town of Winnipeg, Maine, whither I had been sent by my chief to investigate a number of forgeries that had been perpetrated on the First National Bank of that place.

The second day after my arrival there I traced the forgeries to the right parties, and after attending their trial before the town magistrate, returned to my hotel.

Entering the sitting-room, I picked up a weekly paper, which represented in a journalistic way the only publication the town afforded.

Opening it, the first thing that met my eyes was a two-column article, with the following startling headlines, in very bold, black type:

REALISTIC ACTING!

A Genuine Tragedy in Harrison Hall!

THE LEADING MAN OF THE BERKLEY STAR TROUPE DROPS DEAD ON THE STAGE WHILE PERFORMING HIS PART —A VERY MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT!

The description of the affair contained no insinuation of foul-play beyond the last line of the heading, and I would probably have paid no further attention to the matter beyond the momentary interest it excited in my mind, had not two men entered at that moment, both of whom I recognized as actors, whom I had seen lounging about the dramatic haunts of New York.

Both took chairs a few feet from me, and entered into a conversation, unmindful of my presence.

"I tell you, Ben," said one, "there's something very queer about Bill Berkley's death, and I don't take a cent's worth of stock in the finding of the coroner's jury, that he came to his death by heart-disease. He was as sound a man as you or I. My opinion is that there was foul-play somewhere. I believe he was poisoned."

"Pshaw!" replied the other, dropping his voice to almost a whisper; "don't crack your opinions quite so loud, Bill. If any such ideas got abroad it would break our business all up, and you know we've had a tough run of luck so far."

"Good luck or bad luck, no matter what comes," replied the other, "Bill was my friend. I believe his death was brought about by foul means, and I won't be satisfied until the affair is cleared up, and the guilty party punished."

I had closely noted the manner of both men, unobserved by them, over the top of my paper, and mentally determined in my mind that the man called Ben was the villain in the tragedy played the night before, and that I would go to the manager of the company and lay my conclusions before him, and solicit an opportunity from him to prove whether my suspicions were correct or not.

In accordance with his resolution, I sought the manager in his office at the hall where his company were performing, and informed him that I was a detective, and had read an account of the tragedy of the night before. I added, like the public, I was convinced that a murder was at the bottom of the incident, and urged upon him the necessity of clearing all the members of his troupe from suspicion by placing the blame where it rightly belonged.

He concurred with me that such a course was necessary to place all hands right in the eyes of the dramatic profession, among whom the deceased was widely known and respected, and said that he would gladly place all the means in his power at my disposal, if I would undertake to solve the mystery. In my younger days I had belonged to several amateur dramatic associations, and plumed myself on being acquainted with the routine duties of the profession sufficiently well to undertake the performance of a part in a legitimate company.

I suggested to him that I be allowed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of his leading man, assuring him of my ability to successfully fulfill the duties connected with that position.

He agreed to allow me to fill that job until he could fill the place with a professional from one of the regular dramatic agencies, and gave me a part to study for the following night's performance.

The play was intended to show how eventually true love surmounts all obstacles, and finally triumphs. The plot showed the machinations of an avaricious father who had set his mind in wedding his handsome daughter to an aged and wealthy nobleman, who owned the farm upon which the ambitious parent lived. In this purpose he was opposed by his daughter, who had given her affections to a poor but honorable young farmer in the neighborhood. As leading man, the latter character fell to my lot, and as leading heavy the art of the father devolved upon one of the men whom I had seen in the sitting-room at the hotel.

In the second act of the play I was supposed to pay a surreptitious visit to the object of my love, in her parlor, where I am discovered by her father, and ordered to leave and never show myself within his doors again.

I went back to my hotel, and was soon deeply engrossed with the study of my part.

On the way to the hall in the evening, I was amused to see myself billed on the large boards in front of the door as "The eminent young tragedian from one of the leading theaters of New York, who had been engaged at an enormous expense to fill the vacancy caused by the mournful death of William Berkley."

Making my way to the green-room, I was introduced by the manager to the members of his company, after which he left me to attend to his duties in front of the house.

During the half-hour wait before the rising of the curtain I indulged in a confidential chat with the low comedian of the company, a little weazen-faced, dried-up sort of an individual, who proved a very budget of information on all the private affairs of all his companions in the company, and not at all backward about making me as well acquainted with their concerns as he was.

When questioned as to his opinion regarding Bill Berkley's death, he said, placing one finger on the side of his nose, and looking at me in a quizzical way:

"My friend, our heavy man, Ben Davis, I think, could tell you more about that than I could."

This was an insinuation, I thought, which would bear an explanation, and I pressed him to tell me on what grounds he based his belief.

"You see our leading lady over there," he said, pointing to a handsome woman on the other side of the room. "Well," he continued, as I nodded assent, "Bill Berkley and Ben Davis were dead stuck on her, both of 'em head-over-heels in love, and she being a regular coquette, it was mighty hard to tell sometimes which one she favored. But, on the whole, she seemed to give Bill the preference, at least she did, decidedly, for a week previous to his death, and Ben Davis was almost crazy with jealousy.

"Another thing that makes me kind of suspicious of Ben, is that in all scenes where he and Bill played together the latter played all around him and gave him no show for any favor with the audience. Why, only day before yesterday," he went on, "our manager told Ben that he was a dummy on the stage alongside of Bill, and the remark fairly set him off his ear with anger and jealousy. Taking all things together, I don't think I am far wrong in saying that I think Ben Davis could tell you more about Bill Berkley's death than any one else."

The entrance of Davis at this moment, and the call-boy to announce that the curtain was about to raise, put an end to all further conversation on the subject.

I had only two short speeches in the first act, and during the waits in the green-room I busied myself in looking over the speeches of the other characters so as to be familiar with my cues.

There was one speech in Ben Davis' part in the second act which struck me as affording a fine opportunity to try Hamlet's ruse on his stepfather and queen mother in fastening the guilt of his father's death on them. I resolved to use it when we were playing the scene together on the stage. If it failed to twinge his conscience, I should feel convinced that the suspicions of the low comedian had no basis in fact.

The first act over, Ben Davis came to me and essayed to give some instructions how to play a scene in the second, which he claimed was the test scene in the drama.

"When I find you in my daughter's *boudoir*," he said, "and bid you be gone, throw your whole soul into your answer, and between us we'll make the scene so lively it will bring down the house."

I assured him that I would follow his instructions to the letter, adding "that it would not be my fault if I did not 'bring down the house,' and him, too."

"Don't be too confident about bringing me down," he replied, with a sardonic grin. "I've brought down better leading men than you in my day."

"I haven't a doubt about that," I replied tauntingly, adding: "Bill Berkley, for instance."

The mention of the dead actor's name caused his face to turn livid with rage, and coming close to me, he fairly hissed in my face:

"If you dare mention that man's name to me again I'll make food for the worms out of you. He's dead and damned, I hope. Take care that you don't meet his fate. I am a man not to be balked."

The whole manner of the man confirmed in mind that the low comedian's suspicions were correct, and inspired me with the determination to carry out the plan I had concocted in my mind to fix the guilt of Bill Berkley's death upon him.

The curtain rose upon the second act, and in keeping with the plot, I entered on the stage to what was supposed to be the *boudoir* of the old farmer's daughter.

While engaged in the mimic love *tete-a-tete* with my enamorata, which all lovers in real life are supposed to go through, the door on R. C. opened, and in strode Ben Davis, as the irate father.

"Curse it!" was the opening speech. "You base-born menial, how dare you show your face in my house?" Then to his daughter: "Adelaide, quit the room at once. Leave me alone with this clod-hopper until I chastise him as his impudence deserves."

As his daughter obeyed and moved down the short flight of stairs, supposed to lead into another room, I advanced with upraised fist and exclaimed, giving all the force to the speech of which I was capable, so that every word could be heard distinctly over the house:

"Ben Davis, you black-hearted villain, how dare you show your guilty face on a public stage? Before all these people whom you have outraged by your presence, I denounce you as the murderer of William Berkley!"

For a moment he stood as if riveted to the spot, his face fairly death-like with guilt.

My bold interpolation in the scene astounded the audience, every one of which was acquainted with the tragedy of the night before. They all remained as quiet as if spell-bound with the horrible charge I had made. I could not prove my charge, of course. It was merely a suspicion which the man's actions seemed to confirm, and I took the risk of accusing him merely to make him admit his guilt. As for Davis, he made no reply, but stood with lifted hands looking at me as if I were some horrid vision that had charmed him.

Matters were becoming embarrassing, when, to my relief, a man arose in the audience and walked down the aisle, hopped upon the stage, and walking up to Davis, informed him that he was the sheriff, and as such arrested him to answer the charge that had been so publicly made.

Davis submitted meekly, and walked off the stage in company with the sheriff to the town jail, where he was locked up to await an appearance before the magistrate.

As his presence was necessary to the continuance of the play, the manager asked the indulgence of the audience for the evening, which was readily granted, and they all departed for their homes.

When I returned to my hotel, I thought the affair of the evening over, and found that I had placed myself in a rather awkward position. I had made a serious charge against a man upon merely circumstantial conclusions, and saw that in order to place myself right with the public, I must produce some tangible proof of the truth of my charge.

On coming downstairs the first thing that greeted my ears was the information that the jailor, in making his rounds in the morning, had found Ben Davis dead in his cell, and that a sheet of paper was found on the cot beside him, on which was written a confession to the effect he was the cause of Bill Berkley's death. He stated that he was prompted to do the deed through professional jealousy, and to get rid of him as a rival for the hand of Helen Jackson, the leading lady. Rather than stand the disgrace of death on the gallows, or imprisonment, he had taken his own life.

Of course, having accomplished my purpose, I was not disposed to continue in my position as leading man of the "Berkley Star Troupe," and as the season was pretty near over, and the manager had been in hard luck for a long time, he concluded to disband and return to New York, a resolution which he carried into effect that very day. The same train which carried me back also bore the members of the company in which I had played my first and most successful engagement on any legitimate stage.

STORIES OF GREAT DETECTIVES

BY A NEW YORK JOURNALIST

The writer has had occasion professionally to learn a great deal about the real detectives. He has talked with them, corresponded with them, heard the narrative of their lives and exploits, and enjoyed in reality all the interest and excitement connected with these men that is constantly presented in the fiction of the day.

For the benefit of the thousands of readers of "Mystery Magazine," we propose to relate some of our experiences, and give a rapid glance at the most noted men in the different cities of the United States. The number of professional detectives is now very large. They are employed in every branch of the United States Government; all the great cities have a trained force, and the private agencies are to be found in all the cities, with correspondents throughout the civilized world. Our "Stories of Great Detectives" give, perhaps, the first familiar relation ever attempted of the characteristics of the great detectives who have made the detection of crime a new science.

INSPECTOR THOMAS BYRNES

NO doubt most people, who did not know the man, thought Inspector Thomas Byrnes, the former head of the Police Detective Bureau of New York, a fierce, rude personage. But he was nothing of the kind.

"Show the gentleman in," he would say to the officer who presented your card.

You passed behind a railing, then through a door into a small narrow room, where there were a desk, chairs, a lounge, and various photographs of criminals. Here the inspector generally awaited you. He was a large, fine-looking man, and always dressed with taste and in the fashion. He met you with a profound bow, a fascinating smile, and a warm pressure of the hand.

"Glad to see you, sir," he remarked in a pleasant voice. "Walk into the next room. What can I do for you?"

Now all this was very agreeable, and a surprise. Officials are not generally so gracious, and those connected with police matters are not expected to be. To come in contact with all the crime of such a city as New York through a long career, as had been the case with Inspector Byrnes, was calculated to sour and roughen even a kindly nature. But fortunately for the public, Inspector Byrnes was one of the most polite and kind-hearted of officials. To the social visitor he was the very pink of politeness, and to the male or female criminal, though he might have been firm, and ordered them put in a cell, he was never personally harsh about it.

In one corner of a large room was a desk. Here the inspector took his rest, after providing one for his visitor. The building was a large marble structure on Mulberry street, known as Police Headquarters. It was well provided with cells for the temporary detention of prisoners. All police information was sent to and from there by telegraph. The daily newspapers had offices for their reporters directly opposite, and no carriage ever drove up to headquarters at any hour of the day or night that the object of the visit was not at once inquired into. On the slightest hint of any sort of trouble the reporters hastened to the scene, and in time for their papers had a "full account" of the affair.

At the sides of the room were cases which contained the tools and weapons taken from criminals. The ropes and black caps used in execution were also to be seen. Photographs of noted criminals hung everywhere, and form part of the famous "Rogues' Gallery," which had been collected for the use of the police and public. Nothing is more astonishing than the tools taken from bank burglars. They were of the most powerful and costly character.

"Those big things up there," said the inspector, "were used by the Manhattan Savings Bank robbers."

"That was a great case," we remarked.

"It was the greatest robbery ever planned."

It will be remembered that the robbers were two years in planning and executing this robbery. They obtained nearly two millions in United States bonds, and other bonds and cash.

Byrnes took the matter in hand and arrested the robbers. He traced out everything about it, even to the division of the plunder. The robbers never could dispose of any of the bonds, and the final loss of the bank was only some forty or sixty thousand dollars. The aggregate sentences of the robbers amounted to forty-nine years. Nugent, the ex-policeman, who was sent to State prison in New Jersey for attempting to rob a bank cashier on the cars, was tried for connection with the Manhattan robbery and acquitted, though Byrnes was perfectly satisfied in regard to his guilt.

The inspector once made this statement:

"Jimmy Hope, the last member of the gang, fell into the hands of the San Francisco authorities while attempting to plunder a bank, and was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. When his time was up he was brought to this city for trial on the old charge. The search for the cracksmen took nearly three years, and during that time it cost me between $3,000 and $4,000 prosecuting it and arresting the criminals. I never received a cent from the city or the bank. I presented a bill of expenses to the Manhattan Bank officials, but heard nothing from it. The police department at that time had no fund to reimburse its members for traveling expenses. Since I had charge of the detective bureau, with the consent of the commissioners, I applied to the Board of Apportionment for a contingent fund. Now a sum of money is set apart for the purpose of paying all expenses in the working of the cases."

We noticed a pistol with a white handle reposing in one of the pigeon-holes of the desk, and remarked that no doubt it had a history.

"History!" repeated the inspector; "I guess it has. That is the pistol with which McGloin killed the Frenchman. Look at it."

He handed it to us.

Since that date there had been another rope and black cap added to the criminal relics of the City of New York, used in the execution of the young man who pulled the trigger of that little pistol in one of the most brutal murders of modern times.

The whole detective system of New York was in charge of Inspector Byrnes. It is now in a condition of effectiveness for speedy and thorough work which it never reached at any other period. He had forty detective sergeants at

headquarters, and all the ward detectives were under his orders. When an order was issued for the closing of unlawful places, such as gambling-houses, lottery and policy-offices, he held the ward detectives personally responsible for its execution. He scattered his men all over the city, with special kinds of thieves to look after. He was particularly watchful of Wall Street, and kept a large force in that section.

Inspector Byrnes went on the police force when a young man, and went through all the grades. He was thoroughly posted as to all the rascals who flourished during twenty-five years of his time. When he heard of a crime and the manner it had been committed, he could generally tell whose work it was. Sometimes he would mark a few names on a piece of paper, and tell his detectives to find the parties. When they were produced, some of them were usually willing to confess to the deed. As he rode downtown he might read of some crime which had been committed. As soon as he reached his office he was ready, not only to send the proper direction to arrest some one for the offense, but he had determined on the particular detective or detectives most suitable for the undertaking.

Many persons were ushered into the room of which we speak. Some of them were under arrest, and they were obliged to answer many questions put to them by the inspector. Often pale-faced men and half-fainting women were led away to the cells. When life-long criminals were brought in they were never defiant with Byrnes, but inclined to confess and oblige him. He had calls, too, from those just out of prison, who wished to assure him of their intention to lead better lives. While a very terror to evil-doers, he was always ready to encourage those who wished to abandon criminal associations.

W. S. BAUBIEN

FOR over twenty years W. S. Baubien had been a busy and expert detective in Chicago. Here is a narrative of some of his most important exploits, told in his own words:

"In the spring some time ago, about the middle of May, I was sent for in great haste to go out about twenty miles from Chicago. There had been a great deal of horse-stealing going on for some time, and among the rest who had lost horses was a wealthy farmer, who had lost one of a matched team that he valued at five hundred dollars apiece, and he would give all the horse was worth to find the thief and horse.

"Upon investigation I found, about six weeks previous to the commencement of the stealing, Mr. Brown (the farmer) had hired one Charles Hicks to work about the farm. One of his duties was to care for these horses, and he very much admired Prince—in fact, so much so, he concluded to take him and go. The barn was not more than one hundred feet from the house, but he was an old hand at the business. He spread the robes upon the floor, and hay as far as the ground was soft, so as to break the trail, but as Brown sent for me immediately, he had not more than twenty hours the start of me.

"Learning that he had friends in Kansas, I immediately started for that State. Arriving at Kansas City, Missouri, and doing some telegraphing, I located my man. In four days after I had the pleasure of seeing Prince standing near my hotel harnessed to a buggy.

"But the man did not tally with my description. He seemed to be waiting for some one. Presently up came a man who answered my description very well, and knowing the horse by a peculiar mark, I knew it must be him.

"I waited until the first party handed him some money, and I stepped up and had my 'come-alongs' on his left wrist before he knew it.

"'You are——'

"I had not time to say 'my prisoner' before I felt a flash in my eyes, and thought for a second I was a dead man. But I kept hold of my man, and when he felt the muzzle of my revolver at his temple he was very glad to give himself up. Had his revolver been in good working order my career as a detective would have been rather short.

"The man who had bought the horse was very glad to get his money back. While waiting for Brown, I found that Hicks was an old operator in Kansas City. There was an indictment against him for burglary, which sent him down for ten years. I never think of my escape without a shudder; it was rather a warm initiation for a young beginner.

"We had some very exciting times in our patrol that year. We caught a couple of noted burglars on the morning of January 14. I was going around with one of my men, and as he stepped up and tried one of his doors it was found to be open.

He passed in, I after him. We were all wrapped and bundled up, as it was very cold. My man passed to the back of the store to examine the back-door, when two men jumped from behind the counters and backed me out of the door. One of the burglars wheeled and fired at me before I had a chance to fire at him. His ball came so close I felt it whiz as it went by my cheek. I returned the compliment, but he kept on until my second shot went through his hat. He then thought it time to stop.

"On examination, we found him to be Jim Carroll, alias Handy Andy, a noted cracksman. He turned over more stolen property than any other man that had been arrested for some time, and got his ten years in Joliet (our penitentiary). The other one we did not get.

"In July, the same year, we had a similar time. There had been a number of burglaries in the western part of the city, and we were feeling quite sore over it, and very anxious to bring some of them to justice.

"On this night I was looking around, and hearing a slight noise in the rear of one of our places, the residence of a prominent alderman, I stole very quietly back to the yard, where, behold you, a man had placed a ladder to one of the second-story windows, and was up there, just about to enter.

"He was so intent upon getting in, he had not heard me, and when I called out to him to come down, he started so that he dropped the revolver he held in his hand, and as I bid him come quick, with my revolver pointed at his head, he thought it best to come. We found, on examination, another revolver, a bottle of chloroform, and burglars' tools enough to take him anywhere he wanted to go. He gave the name of George Hines. The alderman was very thankful, and thought I had preserved his life. If he had not dropped his revolver I would not have captured him so easy. We gave him fifteen years, which he is still serving out."

Detective Beubien has seen desperate service, as his statements show, and he was a man constituted by nature to hold his own under all such circumstances. He was as keen as a brier and as stealthy as a snake. It was the common opinion that he did not know what fear was.

The next number will contain the continuation of this series. Max F. Schmittberger will be featured.

A COAT SLEEVE

The Story of a New York Detective

By G. G. SMALL

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN our report to Chief Matsell that night, he approved of the plan, and by eight o'clock the next morning we met at the Hoffman, from which we commanded a good view of that part of the stand occupied by Jake Pell.

He arrived about the same time, and for an hour or so busied himself in cleaning his taxicab, and rubbing it with chamois-skin until it shone like a new silk hat.

Finally he began to drive slowly towards Twenty-third street.

"Do you see that cab?" I asked of the chauffeur we had engaged, at the same time pointing it out.

"Jake Pell's?"

"Yes. Keep as near to him as you can without exciting suspicion."

"All right," he said, as Phil pulled the door of the auto shut, and away we drove.

It was about half-past nine by this time, and after reaching Twenty-third street, Pell drove quite rapidly into West Twenty-third street, while our man kept at a respectful and unsuspicious distance from him.

It was fortunate that he knew Pell, for it would save us much annoyance and allow us to keep our eyes about us.

Down to Sixth avenue he went; up it as far as Twenty-fourth street, into which he turned and continued towards Seventh avenue.

Arriving at a fine-looking residence between the two avenues, he pulled up to the curb-stone.

Of course we could not follow this example without arousing suspicion, so I told our man to continue on to Seventh avenue, and up it, just enough to get out of sight.

He obeyed instructions.

From this point, after getting out of the taxicab, we could see Pell's auto without arousing suspicion.

In about five minutes two women, one of them dressed in black, came down the front stoop of the house, and after apparently giving the man some instructions, they got into the taxi.

The chauffeur wheeled and started back towards Sixth avenue, and we quickly followed; but just as we were passing the house, who should come out of it and walk calmly down the steps but the alleged brother of Louise Wilbur.

He was dressed with scrupulous neatness, and walked towards Sixth avenue leisurely.

"Now, then, I am sure of it," said I.

"Of what!"

"Do you see that fellow just ahead of us?"

"Yes."

"Well, take a good look at him as we pass, for that is the chap we want. It is true, and they are living together as man and wife now instead of passing for brother and sister. Now we have them dead to rights."

"Yes; but who do you imagine the old girl in black is?" asked Phil.

"Be hanged if I know; but I wouldn't be a bit surprised if it was this bogus Mrs. Page, for I think they are all of the same piece, and all concerned in this murder, and in the hopes of getting his estate."

Phil was looking back at the person I had indicated, with his keen hawk-eyes.

"I know that fellow," said he finally.

"The deuce you do!"

"I think I do; and if there isn't another crook exactly like him in style and general appearance, he is Frank Cutter, alias 'Tom Brown,' and half a dozen others."

"Has he ever been nipped?"

"Once, I think; some five years ago, for being engaged in some swindling operations, but I forget the particulars. The old chief will know. He never forgets anything."

But as we could afford to lose sight of him for a while, knowing just where to find him now, we continued on after the cab and the fair occupants, until they reached Wanamaker's, where they alighted.

By this time we were near enough for me to get a good look at both of them, as they left the taxicab and turned to go into the store.

It was true. The golden-haired one was Louise Wilbur, and the other, just as I had said, was Mrs. Page.

This, then, was where she was passing her vacation while waiting for her letters of administration, eh?

Those letters she would never get.

"Well, Phil, what is the next move?" I asked, after assuring him of our game.

"They will probably return in time for lunch, but it is a question whether he does or not."

"Who?"

"Frank Cutter."

"Suppose we wait, and scoop them all in together at dinner-time?"

"That might be done; but I think I know of a better plan," said Phil.

We had driven up Ninth street, and into Fourth avenue, and headed slowly uptown.

"What is it?"

"He is a slippery, unreliable cuss, and we ought to nab him on sight. Now he has probably gone to Mike Murray's. Let us go there, and pull him in. This will not alarm the women folks, and we can secure them on their return to lunch."

"Good! Don't let us lose a moment. Chauffeur, go to Mike Murray's," said I; "quick!"

"No, no," put in Phil. "It is too early yet. The game don't begin there before noon."

"But he may be on his way there, and we can intercept him, which would be much better than arresting him at Mike's," said I.

"That's so. Drive slowly past Mike's and on up Broad-

way," he added, to the driver. "We want to get him with as little fuss as possible."

"Right you are, Phil;" and with this we both leaned back and watched from the windows for our man.

It was all dull at Mike's, being too early by an hour or so for "business," and our chauffeur allowed his machine to go past the place, and so on into Broadway, up which we continued at the same leisurely pace.

Not a sight did we get of him, and I began to get nervous. If he escaped me a second time, under these circumstances, I should never forgive myself.

But presently we saw him strolling leisurely across Union Square, smoking a cigar, and fully at ease with the world, seemingly.

We have read of conscience-smitten murderers, and all that sort of thing, but I tell you, my boy, my experience convinces me that they exist in imagination oftener than in real life.

For the rascal possessed of nerve enough to take a human being's life for money, has got enough to carry him through the world as calmly as an honest man could go.

But a truce to moralizing.

We drove past him, and then alighting, told the chauffeur to keep well in sight of us and be ready to drive up at any moment, after which we followed him on foot.

Phil was right. He was headed for Mike Murray's.

We kept a few rods behind him, as our driver did with us.

As soon as he turned out of Broadway, we increased our pace and overtook him before he had reached the gambling-house.

Phil was the first to speak.

"Frank Cutter, I want you," said he quietly.

The fellow started, and attempted to pull his pistol, but before he could do so he was looking down the cold muzzle of my gun.

"Give us your hands, Frank."

"What for?" demanded the prisoner, pale and trembling with excitement.

"We want to take you quietly to headquarters. Chief Matsell wants to see you," said I, and before he could reply, Phil had snapped a pair of handcuffs around his wrists.

I beckoned to our chauffeur.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?"

"You will learn presently. Don't be nervous, we will take you in style," said I; and just then our car drove up. "Get in."

"But I demand to know why I am arrested."

"Don't be impatient, old fellow. You will know all about it presently," said Phil, as he assisted the bewildered prisoner into the car.

"Police!" he shouted.

"Oh, there are two of them with you, never fear," said Phil, showing his shield.

This seemed to complete his paralyzation, and he leaned back in his seat, while the chauffeur headed him in the direction of headquarters.

"I don't understand it," growled the prisoner.

"But we do. That's all right."

He never spoke again until we reached headquarters, where we took him at once before Chief Matsell.

"Hello!" said the old policeman. "Officer," he added, addressing me, "I hope you have not mistaken Frank Cutter, with his string of alaises, for the man Wilbur?"

"I confess that such is the case, chief," said I.

"Well, Frank, you are in a snug box this time, and no mistake," said he, to the prisoner.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, your pal, Tom Duff, has squealed."

"Tom Duff!" he exclaimed excitedly.

"Yes."

"I—I do not know him."

"But he knows you very well, as we do. Fellow-murderers ought to know each other."

"Fellow-murderers! What do you mean?"

"Tom Duff held Mr. Page while you murdered and robbed him on Sixteenth street dock."

"It is false!"

"That remains to be shown by a jury. Search him," he added, to us.

We found on his person several hundred dollars and a large quantity of jewelry, together with a revolver and several letters.

"I protest!" shouted the prisoner.

"Not another word. Lock him up!" said the chief, indignantly, and in two minutes more he was safely under lock and key, but not in the same tier with Duff.

"Boys," said the chief, as we returned to his private office, "you are doing well—first-rate. I am proud of you. Now find those two women."

"We will have them here within an hour, chief," said I.

"Oh, you have got them dead to rights, eh? Very good—very good. But don't lose any time, for eels are always uncertain, until you have them sanded."

"You shall hear from us soon, sir," said Phil, as we saluted and retired.

Well, after all this time, it did seem as though we were about winding up the case—so far as the police authorities were concerned; and I was not sorry.

But there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, I remembered.

It was now past twelve, and the ladies had, undoubtedly, returned from shopping, in order to be in time for lunch.

So we hastened back, exchanging our car for a hack on the way, and had the pleasure of seeing our people just alighting from their car as we turned into the street.

The man drove away, and we took his place by the curb just two minutes later.

I alighted and followed them up the stoop, just as the front-door closed.

I rang, and the landlady opened the door.

Both Mrs. Page and Miss Wilbur were just going up the front-stairs to their rooms.

"Mrs. Page and Miss Wilbur, I want you," said I quickly.

They stopped suddenly, and looked at me surprised and speechless.

"Come down, please," I added, while the landlady looked on aghast.

"Who are you?" Miss Wilbur finally asked.

"I am a detective," said I, showing my shield, at which Mrs. Page lost her balance, and came near falling downstairs.

"But there is some mistake," suggested the landlady.

"None whatever on my part, madam, but I cannot answer for you. I arrest you both. Come with me to headquarters."

"Never!" cried Miss Wilbur.

"Oh, yes, you will. Your lover is there to keep you company."

"Frank Cutter is there. Come along."

"Not with life!" said she, diving into her pocket frantically.

Darting past the woman Page, who was tottering on the stairs, I reached the desperate girl just in time to wrench a small revolver from her hand.

The landlady screamed, and this brought Phil upon the scene.

"Come along quietly, or I shall be obliged to handcuff you," said I to the woman Wilbur.

"This is an outrage. Send for the police."

"There are two of them here now."

"Better go along, ladies, for I am certain that there is some mistake," said the landlady.

"What does it mean?" moaned Mrs. Page.

"You will find out at headquarters. Come!"

"Take these things," said Wilbur, handing her bundles to the landlady, as did the other woman.

"We shall be back again soon—never fear," added Miss Wilbur, who never for a moment lost her self-control.

We handed them into the hack and took seats in front of them, after giving direction to the chauffeur.

The business was done very quietly, and we were bounding along towards headquarters.

But I soon detected Wilbur in trying to get a ring off her finger, and placed my hand upon hers.

"Do not remove your 'engagement' ring," I said to her. "You know you showed it to me once before, when your hair was darker, and you must not get rid of it now."

"You are a spy and sneak."

"All that may be; but having heard the history of that ring since you showed it to me, and knowing from whence it was taken, and by whom, I naturally feel interested in it."

I saw the ring glittering upon her finger, and had no idea of allowing her to throw it out of the window.

The woman Page was affected to hysterics, and her younger companion devoted much of her time to bracing her up, and scoffing at her nervousness and anxiety.

Well, we finally arrived at headquarters and escorted our prisoners before the chief.

Here the woman Page broke completely down and moaned most piteously.

I led Miss Wilbur up to the chief's desk, holding the hand on which the jealously-guarded ring was.

"Here is the woman, and there the ring," said I.

"Indeed! What is the name now?" he asked.

"Wilbur—Louise Wilbur," said I.

"Oh. I knew you three years ago as Adelaide Winstine."

"You speak in riddles, sir," said she, looking at the old man impudently.

"Very well, let it go for that at present. But I will take Mr. Page's ring, if you please."

"It is my ring, sir."

"Very well. I will take good care of it for you;" and in spite of her protests the ring was taken from her, together with her other valuables, and she was locked in a cell remote from those occupied by the other prisoners.

Then he turned to the woman Page and questioned her severely. She broke down worse than before, and in the end made a full confession.

How she had lived with the real Mrs. Page and got her into a lunatic asylum, after which she possessed herself of all her papers; received letters and remittances from Thomas Page for a long time without his knowing the fraud that was being practiced upon him; how she heard of his death, and with the connivance of the Wilbur woman and others, who murdered and robbed the man, she postured as his widow, with the understanding that all were to share alike in his estate if she obtained it. She knew all about the plot to murder him, she finally confessed, and told who his murderers were.

In short, it was a full confession, from first to last, and enabled the Grand Jury to act understandingly; and the result was that Tom Duff and Frank Cutter were indicted for the murder and the two women for accessories before the fact.

A more abject creature was never seen than this woman was, and her confession served the ends of justice and helped unravel a great mystery.

The real Mrs. Page finally recovered and came into possession of her husband's property.

Duff and Cutter were tried, convicted, and electrocuted, while the women were sent to prison for long terms, and I don't know but what they are there now. "Mike" was also indicted as an accessory, and in addition to his unexpired term, he was given twenty years additional.

Now, then, my story is finished, and you can understand how I came to the front as a New York detective. Many years have passed since then, and I have had many intricate mysteries to unravel; but to my dying day I shall never forget THE COAT SLEEVE, and the mystery in connection with it that I unraveled.

(*The end.*)

LOOK!

A NEW DETECTIVE SERIAL

Begins in No. 34

Do not miss the opening chapters of Police Captain Howard's clever story of criminal detection. It is entitled:

"SOME SCRAPS OF PAPER"

The plot, developing from a sinister deed in San Francisco, carries the reader through a series of exciting adventures, until the guilty party is exposed.

A MARINE WONDER

ONE of the largest and most astonishing marine wonders seen for some time has recently been brought to light from ocean depths. This is a remarkable specimen of a giant sunfish. This huge monster measures ten and a half feet from tip to tip of his fins and is nine feet long; it weighs nearly 2,000 pounds. The great fish was captured in the Pacific Ocean off the California coast, and the skin has been mounted in New York for museum exhibition.

Such huge monsters are rare, though some weighing from 500 to 800 pounds have been obtained occasionally. They are to be seen in tropical and temperate seas, both in America and other countries. While inhabiting the open sea, at great depths, they are frequently to be seen off the California and Florida coasts. The skin has a brilliant silvery appearance, and at night is said to be highly phosphorescent. The flesh, however, is not used for food. The fish has a comparatively small mouth, and to provide for the enormous stomach consumes thousands of small fish and various other marine creatures. The great fins are three feet long, and when swimming the upper one protrudes high out of the water. From certain ridges and folds developed on the body it is thought the monster is about fifty years old. One of the striking features, next to the colossal size, is the peculiar shape of the body, which looks as if the hind portion had been bitten off by some other formidable ocean inhabitant and left only a fringe of a tail.

CURRENT NEWS

A QUEER PHOTOGRAPH

A bulky mahogany log, which had been sawed into boards, at Belfast, Ireland, was found to show, on every board, right through, a clearly-defined "photograph" of a small deer and a larger animal, running. The "photograph" was probably transmitted by lightning during a storm.

BIG BLACKFISH

William Walsh, of the Division of the Naval Reserve stationed at Nantucket, astride of a stranded blackfish, gives an idea of the size and appearance of the fish which have this year visited Nantucket for the first time in forty-four years. Two schools of the fish were stranded on the north shore of the island last summer.

The second school was the larger, being made up of about seventy-five fish, while the first counted up fifty-six. The heaviest of the first weighed over 3,000 pounds. The fish was not dead, but merely stranded. Walsh got into deep water and took a ride upon it some quarter of a mile or more out to sea.

WINE TO MAKE HENS LAY

It is reported from France that Professor Joubert, of the Agricultural College at Fontainbleau, has discovered a simple method of making hens lay. It appears that the professor feeds them with wine in addition to their ordinary food. A series of elaborate experiments was conducted by Joubert, and these produced, it is said, the same result in every case. In each instance he experimented during the four winter months with two sets of twelve fowls of the same breed, adding bread soaked in wine to the food of one of the two sets of twelve. In every case the wine-fed hens laid more eggs than the others.

CEDAR SCARCE

Cedar suitable for use in the manufacture of lead-pencils is yearly becoming more scarce and expensive. Germany alone exports 15,166 tons to foreign countries every year, or about 3,033,200,000 pencils. The difficulty and expense of procuring suitable wood led to careful investigation for a substitute, and for some time a German company has been making pencils the core of which is encased in a composition whose principal ingredient is potatoes. It is said these pencils are easier to sharpen, and the available supply of potatoes is practically inexhaustible. A pencil of the best quality costs the manufacturers only $0.00928, while one of second quality can be marketed for about half that figure. The possible yearly output is estimated at 14,000,000 pencils.

"TRAVELING" STONES

"Traveling" stones, from the size of a pea to six inches in diameter, are found in Nevada. When distributed on a floor or other lever surface, within two or three feet of one another, they immediately begin to travel toward a common center, and there lie huddled like a clutch of eggs in a nest. A single stone removed to a distance of three and a half feet, upon being released, at once started with wonderful and somewhat comical celerity to join its fellows. These queer stones are found in a region that is comparatively level and little more than bare rock. Scattered over this barren region are little basins, from a few feet to a rod or two in diameter, and it is in the bottom of these that the rolling stones are found. The cause for the strange conduct of these stones is doubtless to be found in the material of which they are composed, which appears to be lodestone or magnetic iron ore.

ELECTRICALLY-HEATED SOLES FOR AVIATORS

Keeping warm is one of the military airmen's greatest problems.

Of the various means of keeping the airmen warm, none has proved the equal of electrically-heated clothing. Heating units in the form of fine resistance wires are incorporated in the heavy coats of the airmen, and the warmth produced is utilized to the fullest extent.

By means of flexible conductors and detachable connectors the heating units of the coats and the shoes are brought into circuit with the airplane generator, which is normally employed for furnishing current to the lights, wireless apparatus, and so on.

CORN GROWS IN CROP

One day recently, Mrs. Willis Carter, residing on Valley street, in front of the court-house, Valdosta, Ga., killed what was apparently a perfectly healthy chicken, but when the fowl was being dressed it was found that a grain of corn had sprouted in the chicken's crop, and through a split in the crop the corn was growing.

There were two sprouts going in different directions and almost meeting around the body of the chicken. These two sprouts were growing between the skin and the flesh. Up to the time the fowl was killed it had apparently shown no ill effects of the peculiar conditions existing on the inside. However, the discovery of the growing corn in the chicken caused Mrs. Carter to abandon her idea of eating the fowl and it was promptly buried.

SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT SHOES

Many superstitions are connected with shoes. It is thought unlucky to put either shoe on the wrong foot. Because Augustus Cæsar was nearly assassinated by a mutineer one day when he put on his left shoe first, a saying has arisen that the right shoe must be put on first unless its owner wishes to court misfortune. Pythagoras, the old Greek sage, told his disciples to put their left foot into their baths first. In Anglo-Saxon marriages the father-in-law gave the bride's shoe to the bridegroom, who touched her on the head with it to denote his lordly authority.

At one time (in the fourteenth or fifteenth century) people wore the points or beaks of their shoes so long that they tumbled over them when they walked, and were forced to tie them to their knees by laces or chains.

CANADA'S SIXTEEN-MILE TUNNEL WILL PIERCE ROCKIES

The Simplon tunnel, the longest railway tunnel in the world, was completed in 1905. It is 12½ miles in length, and gives France and Switzerland direct communication by rail with Milan, Italy. The Simplon tunnel, however, is destined to lose its supremacy when the great Canadian project of piercing the Rock Mountains at Kicking Horse Pass is completed. The eastern portal of this tunnel, 16 miles in length, will be in Alberta, and the western end in British Columbia. It will be about 3½ miles longer than the Simplon.

QUEER CAVES

Exploration of caves in South Berkshire, Mass., resulting in the discovery of stalactites and stalagmites, big white spiders weaving their webs, bats incrusted in the crystals and a submarine brook, made Jack Newboy, of Lenoxdale, recall the day that he went rabbit-hunting in the Paterson woods.

Newboy's dog chased a rabbit into a cave. Jack waited outside for results. He waited two hours, called the dog, and getting no results went home. He found the dog was at home and had the rabbit. Pat, his brother, explained:

"I was fishing on a lake not far from the shore when I heard a commotion in the water near by, and was surprised to see a rabbit in the water. As I watched the dog came to the surface, swam after the rabbit and captured him."

CORPSE COMPLAINS

Vernon Green, an undertaker at Herman, N. Y., was called on the telephone, and was told that a man was dead at a certain place and was probably another "flu" victim. He said he was so busy with other calls he could not get there that night, but left instructions that the body be placed in a cold room with the head elevated, and he would be there to do the embalming the first thing in the morning.

When he reached the place the next morning he went into the cold room prepared to do his work. The supposed corpse raised his head and looked at Mr. Green with as much displeasure as a man in his condition could.

"It is about time some one came," he said. "You are the first person to come near me since last night."

NOT ORE LAND

After fortunes had been spent in pursuing the *ignis fatuus* of vast mineral deposits on the property, the well-known Rattlesnake Hill Farm, in Douglass Township, near Pottstown, Pa., was sold for a song recently, when Lewis H. Levengood bought it for $3,000 from Capt. Julian Fairfax Scott, of New York, who had bought it at a big price.

In order to get the supposed mineral wealth to market a railroad was started, to be run from the western end of Pottstown to Shanesville, where fortunes were spent to develop alleged iron ore deposits. Like those on the Rattlesnake Hill Farm, the Shanesville mines did not pan out, and the railroad never was finished. Besides a fair acreage of farm-land, there are good buildings and a heavy growth of timber on the farm.

DOGS' TEETH AS COINS

Dogs' teeth are the Papuans' gold, the most valuable of "coins" in their estimation. They purchase weapons, cattle, grain and the crude household utensils with dogs' teeth. Only the front canine teeth, however, are of any value, all the others being worthless.

These quaint coins are threaded on fibers, and when a wealthy Papuan goes trading he brings with him strings of these teeth. The women greatly prize them, and make them into necklaces, their wealth and standing in the community being indicated by the number of teeth which compose these ornaments.

The wives and daughters of the influential chiefs wear rows upon rows of them around their necks on every festive occasion. They polish them until they shine like ivory, and they certainly make an effective decoration on a glossy black body.

The men, on the other hand, adorn themselves with rare and beautiful feathers. One necklet shown to the writer was composed of no fewer than 320 teeth, which means that eighty dogs were sacrificed to obtain them.

MUD SPRINGS

The mud springs of Mendocino County, California, are located sixteen miles northeast of Westport on the coast. They occupy a space of twenty-five acres at an altitude of fourteen hundred feet above the sea, and number thirty or forty, with vents ranging from three feet in diameter to three inches. The water which bubbles out of the orifices holds in solution a large percentage of bicarbonate of soda, which solidifies as it spreads over the surrounding land, leaving the surface as white as though covered by snow. Few persons visit these springs, on account of their inaccessibility, but with the extension of the railroad from San Francisco the place will certainly become a popular resort. The water is ice cold, but those who venture to take a mud-bath profess to find great relief from their maladies. In the vicinity there are numberless mineral springs of great volume and potency. A remarkable fact relating to the mud springs is that every earthquake shock in the State, no matter how distant it may be, can be detected by action of the springs, for either the flow of water is increased or the soil which surrounds them quakes. It is said also that at regular periods the water of the springs ebbs and rises like the tide.

THE ANCESTORS OF OUR BIG GUNS

The first percussion-lock for firearms was invented and patented in 1807 by the Rev. Alexander J. Forsythe, a Scottish clergyman, who was born 150 years ago, December 28, 1768. Firearms were first made in Italy in the fourteenth century, and were employed in war by the Burgundians at Arras in 1414. These first small arms were really small cannon, and were borne by two men. In 1471 Edward IV had 300 Flemings armed with hand-guns in his army, and a little later the Swiss armed 10,000 men with arquebuses. The musket was employed in the army of Emperor Charles V early in the sixteenth century. These rude firearms were at first discharged by the application of a flaming torch. About 1517 the wheel-lock method came into use, and afterward the flint was used, from 1692 until the Scottish clergyman invented the percussion principle of igniting gunpowder in muskets, by detonating powder. The flint-lock guns were used by all the European armies during the early period of the Napoleonic wars, and only a few guns embodying Forsythe's invention were in use a century ago. Percussion caps were first generally used about 1825. Since then firearms have undergone vast improvements, and the rifle of ten years ago is now considered out of date for military use.

HAS STRANGE COLLECTION

During the past year, Matt Lyle, well known about Knoxville, Tenn., has picked up pins of various kinds, nails and screws from the streets in surprising quantities. Here is the record he claims for the twelve months between October 10, 1917, and the corresponding date of this year:

Pins, 10,400; safety pins, 375; hairpins, 400; screws, 500; nails (gathered in three years), four kegs.

No pin or nail of any kind escapes his attention. If he sees a crooked nail he takes it to his home on Morgan street, near the Southern Railway, along with his other findings, where he straightens it out and lays it away. His nails are put in a keg at the end of each day. His pins are placed carefully in a cloth which he carries in his pocket at all times. As soon as he gets 1,000 pins in one of these pieces of cloth he takes it home and locks it up in a box, where they are all kept.

He would not give one of these nails or pins to his best friend, he declares. He adds, however, that he might some day sell the nails.

CORRECT DIET CURES RHEUMATISM

Rheumatism is a malady in which medicines, serums and operations avail but little. Its cure is correct living and chiefly correct food intake. Here are some hints given by Dr. R. L. Alasker in *Eating for Health*:

To cure rheumatism clear up the intestines and the blood stream. This may be done usually in from three to four months.

The less one eats in the beginning, the sooner the pains will leave.

In serious cases with much pain, avoid all sour foods for a time.

Buttermilk usually agrees well with rheumatics.

Starchy foods should be eaten but once a day. Meats should be taken but once a day.

My experience has been that sugars and starches cause more suffering among rheumatics than meats do.

Desserts should be omitted until the pain leaves.

Avoid any intestinal sluggishness.

Here is a typical *menu* for rheumatics:

Breakfast—One or two glasses of buttermilk.

Lunch—Two or three kinds of cooked succulent vegetables, such as spinach, cabbage and carrots.

Dinner—Chicken, cooked onions, green peas, generous amount of celery or a vegetable salad.

ODD RITES AND CEREMONIES

In the calendar of ancient Rome the 15th of February was the Feast of Purification, when the worshipers of the pagan gods indulged in rites and ceremonies of expiation. The pagan observance, although brief in duration, was in some of its aspects similar in purpose to the modern Christian Lenten season. As Lent is preceded by the frivolities of Mardi Gras, so did the old Romans prepare for their "cleansing" by a final fling of hilarity.

The Roman Februa was the most remarkable of the feasts of the ancient Romans. The love of the present-day Italian for frequent religious observations, saints' days and festivals may be a heritage from those distant ancestors who worshiped the innumerable deities of their polytheistic faith. These rites and feasts were, says Gibbon, "closely interwoven with every circumstance of business and pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them without at the same time renouncing the commerce of mankind and all the offices of amusement and society."

To avoid participation in these various festivities, without thereby incurring popular or official displeasure and its accompanying punishments, was one of the chief concerns of the early Christians of Rome. There came a time, however, when the shoe was on the other foot, and the triumphant Christians attached severe penalties to the observance of the old feasts. The festival of purification became the Christian Lenten season, the spring celebration of the pagans became the Easter of the Christians, and the December Saturnalia was superseded by Christmas.

TOWN WELLS GUSH

The town of Wyoming, three miles south of Dover, Del., has a phenomenon which officials and residents have been unable to explain. The water system, pumping-station and tower are a quarter-mile from the town proper, with a tank which is nearly 100 feet high and has a capacity of several thousand gallons. Usually it has required an hour or longer to fill the tank by pumping from the driven wells and refill it as water is drawn by consumers.

Within the past week the unusual thing has happened. The keeper of the pumping station was surprised to see the tank filled in about twenty minutes of pumping, and in some instances not that long. It is also noticed that even after the pumps have been shut down the water gushes up the pipe for a considerable length of time, causing the tank to overflow.

With this peculiar situation several town wells have gone dry, the presumption being that the pumping station has struck the same vein of water. Residents with such useless wells have been compelled to tap the town water supply.

MONSTER CATFISH

When the waters subside in the streams of Central Indiana catfishing, it is predicted by fishermen who have studied the habits of that fish, will be better than it has been before for many a year. The best authorities on the habits of this denizen of the deep are of the colored race. They talk with special enthusiasm and gustatory relish of the channel cat, which is so called because it prefers the channels of streams to sluggish waters and often reaches a length of 2 1-2 or 3 feet and a weight of 25 to 30 pounds. It is a fine food fish, and the most gamey of the catfish family.

The best known of the smaller catfish, common from Maine to the Far West and from the Great Lakes to Florida and Texas, is called by different local names. In the East and North it is called the bullhead and horned pout, in Pennsylvania the Schuylkill cat, and further South the little cat. This fish is the delight of the boy fisherman. It prefers the earth worm to any other kind of bait, but will bite voraciously at any food. It grows to a length of 12 to 18 inches, is yellowish brown, more or less clouded with darker shades. The bullhead and mudcat require careful handling. They swallow the hook, and the fisherman, in recovering it, is likely to be horned by the gill fins, which are sharp as needles.

The mudcat of the South sometimes reaches a weight of 75 pounds.

Catfish have been caught in the Ohio and Mississippi rivers that reach a length of 4 1-2 feet and a weight of more than 150 pounds. This fish is known as the Mississippi cat. All catfish are furnished with barbels, beard-like appendages like the whiskers of a cat, and from them they get their name.

BUTTONS FROM MILK

The latest article used in the manufacture of buttons is milk. It will be surprising news to many a man to learn that his white collar cuttons are not what he believes them to be, made of bone or horn, but that they are manufactured from the milk of the cow. The process of manufacturing buttons from milk implies the use of some large and hollow cylinders usually called "separators," which are constructed with a small opening on the side and four on the top. These cylinders are filled with milk and then subjected to an extremely rapid rotation by steam-power. By this process the milk is thoroughly skimmed. It then put into other cylinders and boiled by steam. It soon assumes the shape of a sticky mass, which, after being kneaded, is placed in linen sacks and deprived of all moisture by the use of a heavy press. The remaining matter is then taken out of the sacks, placed in a specially prepared drying apparatus and subjected to an enormous heat by means of steam-pipes. After two or three days this matter grows yellow, like gold, and becomes hard, like stone. Whatever else is done in that direction remains for the present time a matter of business secrets, though it is known that it is subjected to a chemical process, by which it can be easily colored, bleached, molded and rendered adaptable to the manufacture of various kinds of buttons which are worn by us to-day. Every pearl button may be imitated by this milk matter, and it is said that such buttons are hard to distinguish from the real article.

MYSTERIOUS RUINS

Ruins at Pueblo, San Cristobal, recently explored, showed within the rooms such stationary household effects built of stone slabs, as fireplaces and bins for foodstuffs. Cages containing the bony remains of turkeys and eagles were also found. Scattered on the floor and throughout the debris from the collapsed upper stories were numerous implements and utensils of bone, stone and shell, as well as pottery. Most of the specimens were used in the preparation of food and clothing, but things were found which suggested the less material side of life, such as tobacco-pipes, flutes, whistles and ornamental objects of shell and turquoise. In one room was uncovered a small altar in the shape of a low platform. On it stood a human-like image of stone, and around this supposed god were laid numerous objects of various types mentioned above. It has been ascertained that the inhabtiants of these villages, or large groups of apartment houses, as they might be called, were agriculturists and not hunters. Bones of the deer, the buffalo and other animals were occasionally found in the prehistoric ruins, but it seems to be clear that the meat diet was relatively light until the Spanish invaders brought domestic animals from Europe. Remains of charred maize were found, however, in every one of the ruins, so that, although the cultivated fields can no longer be discerned, it is reasonably certain that the inhabitants subsisted mainly by the cultivation of the soil.

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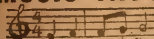

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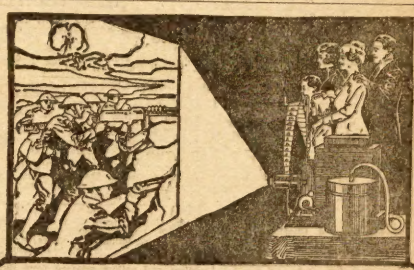

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